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Pretty twins for Julia Roberts

A David protecting a giant

GMA to meet telecom execs on franchise tax

PNR South line rehab to cost P1 billion

Papasang bao ang pork barrel. Naloko ka tayo!

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Ex-GMA publicist gets Cabinet appointment

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

"I COULDN'T resist from a more authoritative source.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has confirmed she has appointed her former publicist, Dante Ang, as chair of the Commission

PNP raises alarm over fake chaplains

By Christian Esguerra

Sunday, November 28, 2004 ● 34 pages / vol. 19 / no. 336

website: www.inq7.net

Economy grows by 6.3%

ASEAN 10: (From left) Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand, Phan Van Khai of Vietnam, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, Hun Sen of Cambodia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, Bounnhang Vorachit of Laos, Dato Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia, Gen. Soe Win of Burma (Myanmar), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (Philippines) and Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore.

But surge not enough to ease fiscal woes

By Michelle V. Bono

Business

Asean, China to create world's biggest free trade zone

VIENTIANE, Laos—Southeast Asian nations and China signed an accord Monday to create the world's biggest free trade area by removing tariffs for their 2 billion people by decade's end—a key step in their status of a trade bloc to rival Europe and North America.

Leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations also signed a Vientiane Action Program to flesh out their agreement but fear to create an Asean Community along the lines of a unified bloc up by 2020. It aims to create a common market with unrestricted trade goods.

At the two-day Asean summit in the Laotian capital of Vientiane, the six most developed Asean members also agreed to abolish tariffs in 11 major sectors by 2007—three years earlier than originally planned.

The agreement called for the lifting of tariffs in areas that include cars, electronics, air travel and wood-based products as part of the Asean Free Trade Area that was established in 1993.

The other sectors in which tariffs would be dropped were fisheries, health care, rubber-based products, agriculture-based products, tourism, e-commerce, and textiles and apparels.

"This is a significant decision because these 11 sectors constitute more than 50 percent of the intra-Asean trade," said M.C. Abad, spokesperson for the Asean secretary general.

The agreement has brought duties and tariffs on many products traded among the six richest members of Asean down to a maximum of 5 percent, with most goods assuming tariffs of zero to 5 percent.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo adjusts her headphone during the start of the two-day Asean summit.

Free trade pact limits entry of Filipino nurses to Japan

TOKYO—The Philippines and Japan on Monday clinched a broad free trade agreement (FTA) that would indirectly bring a number of Filipino nurses into Japan to help cope with the shortage of caregivers here.

But experts say the planned restrictions show how cautious Tokyo still is about opening the door to foreign workers, despite an aging society and an expected shrinkage in the population.

Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reached the agreement on the FTA—Japan's third after deals with Singapore and Mexico—when they met on the sidelines of an Asean leaders' gathering in Vientiane, Japan's trade ministry said in a statement.

The deal, which covers industry, agriculture and the services sector, would allow some nurses and nursing care providers from the Philippines, selected from a pool of licensed practitioners, to work in Japan and apply for visa extensions if they become licensed there, the statement said.

Japan would decide on the number of Filipino nurses and nursing care providers it would accept after discussions with Manila.

Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima told Reuters the deal would be finalized

4 top DND officials replaced

By Cornelio S. Fernandez, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Ted Zattarra

VIENTIANE, Laos—A government shake-up that has begun at the Department of National Defense may not be sweeping as Malacañang earlier implied. But four defense undersecretaries were confirmed yesterday to be definitely leaving.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Southeast Asian leaders meeting in this Laotian capital, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday that President Macapagal-Arroyo had not issued any specific instruction to revamp the bureaucracy.

BONIFACIO REMEMBERED
Workers dressed as revolutionary Katipuneros rally on Chino Roces Bridge (formerly Mandaluyong) toward Malacañang to mark Bonifacio Day and the nation's hero's struggle against foreign capitalism and labor repression.

Dilemma for HIV cases: Motherhood

By Perrito Asanzan dela Cruz

WHEN she found out she was HIV-positive, former Angeles City sex worker Maureen Taylor (not her real name) decided she won't ever get married or have children. The chances of transmitting the AIDS-causing virus from mother to child can be as high as 40 percent and she did not want to take the risk.

Ten years and three children later, Taylor, 36, has changed her mind. Today, she has no regrets having children, under the AIDS education: "I come from a broken family. Pinapasap kong makuha ng pamilya (I've always dreamed of having a family). It's my purpose in life."

It was not an easy choice. With each pregnancy, HIV-positive women risk further complicating their already weakened immune systems and transmitting the virus to the child. That threat is the prohibitive cost of lifetime AIDS medication.

Yet most women who are HIV-positive still go through with their pregnancies, observed Dr. Rodolfo Pelayo, medical specialist of the Philippine National AIDS Council's secretariat, a multi-sectoral body mandated by law to oversee the country's AIDS problem.

Although the country's AIDS status is considered low and slow, at least 2,580 cases of HIV/AIDS had been reported as of September, according to Dr. Dominic Ilarina of the AIDS Society of the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

'Winnie' intensifies, threatens Mindoro

PNR to spend $1B to bring Bicol Express back on track

By Cielnet S. Barino

THE PHILIPPINE National Railways is undertaking a $1-billion upgrade of its 400-km line from Magallanes in Makati to the Bicol region beginning next year as a major step to improving its derailed operations.

PNR General Manager Jose Ma. Ascenio II said the agency would use a $50-million loan from its subsidiary from the South Luzon Expert Import Bank and follow up on a $500-million commitment from the China government to backstop the railway upgrade.

Once the rehab is completed in four years, Ascenio said, the PNR will privatize the operations of its South line since the railway agency is obviously in no position to manage the system.

Maligaya Yard in the PNR workers' union and a former PNR chairwoman defended the loan-and-lease agreement of the railway agency.

"I am not the customer for trains and the Korean chief pushing me on the 1 dang all I can say is the PNR's problems have been there even when I was still in short pants. I am not the problem, but I am helping try to find a solution," he said in an interview with the Inquirer.

Ascenio said the land kept a municipal company after the four-year-old Magallanes station with the two-same train systems—the MRT and the LRT—to allow commuters uninterrupted travel and seamless through-in elevated railway.

In Matnog, PNR passengers and cargo would take the rail/sea roll-off vessels from the Pioneer port in Albay to continue their journey to the Visayas.

Of the $1-billion project cost, about five percent or $50 million would come from the national government.

Half the travel time

Ascenio said the PNR was planning to sell some of its real estate assets to come up with the upcount.

Once in place, the Bicol would time between Manila and Bicol would be cut almost half to about eight hours from the current 15.

Ascenio said the PNR must have to increase its fares by then. Current he said, the railway fare from Legaspi to Manila is $6.60. The legaspi to Matnog portion is $3.30. The Magallanes to Manila portion would like to have increased to $3.30.

He admitted that his efforts were not enough to turn the PNR around because the agency needed major financing to overhaul its operations.

"The last time the fourth line was rehabilitated was about 30 years ago. There had been so many incidents of derailment but nowhere near as bad," Ascenio said, referring to the Nov. 12 accident that killed seven and injured 277 passengers of a Manila-bound train from Bicol.

The plans drafted by Maligaya, Ascenio said, would improve the railway system from Magallanes to Bicol, service the PNR's cargo movement, and eventually build a line from Legaspi to Matnog in Bicol. The legaspi to Matnog portion is expected to cost the $1-billion rest.

MRT, LRT connection

Why Magallanes to Matnog? Currently, the Bicol trip starts in Calamba and not Magallanes.

Ascenio said that the ways administration would like to have connection because the integrity of the system would still be compromised. Much of the leasing and consolidation of the trains and trades are planned on the equations.

Chua's interference

"The PNR has so many problems dating back to the old days. It's just my misfortune that a major train accident happened on my watch. And it just so happens that the trains don't run here on under to Bicol's public service commitment," Ascenio said.

As for former PNR chief Jacob Aquino, Ascenio said the resident interferes with management, which was not her job. The GM said he had good relations with the PNR chairman since before August.

"She wanted me to do things that I don't want to talk about anymore. She thought that she chair was like the GM. My managers had to [ask] Malacañang to reject her because they were getting conflicting orders," Ascenio said.

Aquino said she resigned in June because she could not stomach the corruption in the management.

"Mrs. Aquino did not resign, she was replaced. If she could be shown her resignation, she could be shown anything. She probably thinks it is still Marcos' time," Ascenio said.

The 68-year-old Aquino is the widow of Ruhtrate Aquino, who served in the public works ministry under former President Ferdinand Marcos.

Ascenio said that, since his appointment in 2004, he has cleaned up the PNR and improved the lives of its workers. It was during his term, he said, that their salaries were upgraded according to the Salary Standardization Law and given to them on time, and holidays were added to restore their benefits.

He refused to talk about the Commission on Audit findings on the PNR because it case had been filed against him and his management before the Ombudsman.

Embarrassing

Ascenio said he accepted the PNR post in 2000 hoping that a government posting would help his career in the transport sector.

"I thought it would do something for my career after all the sacrifices, what I gave me and my family was embarrassment," he said.

Asked if he would still be willing to continue heading the PNR, Ascenio said he won't run. What happens next, he said, would all be up to his superiors, including the President.

Pagasa admits miscue on 'Unding,' laments lack of radars to track storms

By Norman Bordadora

THE WEATHER bureau yesterday said it would be difficult to avoid another major fatality as it failed to detect Typhoon "Unding's" change of course toward Oriental Mindoro last week because it only had three radars to track weather disturbances.

Then the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) is on its way installing Doppler radars to track typhoons more accurately.

Three of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) is on its way installing tropical depression "Winnie," which is packing 55 kph winds now becomes, as it appears headed for already-battered Oriental Mindoro.

"If we had a radar in the Bicol area, we could have detected Unding's movements every 15 minutes," said Pagasa officer-in-charge Dr. Prisco Nilo.

"We could have monitored the [public storm signal] earlier," Nilo said. The bureau is an interview. Local man refers to the amount of time needed to warn residents about a coming typhoon.

Nilo said Pagasa was able to raise storm signal No. 3 over Oriental Mindoro only 12 hours before landing hit the province.

"Sufficient lead time would have been 18 to 24 hours," he said.

As Unding's rainwash followed, the residents of Oriental Mindoro hastily had into lines to prepare for the typhoon, with a considerable number of Mindoreños leaving for Bob and would take the storm was about to ravage them.

Nilo said Unding's movement from the Bicol region, where it had been almost stationary, to mid-General Mindoro was treacherous.

"With just three radars, we have difficulty tracking severe weather disturbances. If they weren't erratic, Pagasa could still work with three radars," Nilo said.

He said Pagasa needs at least seven more radars, costing a total of around P40 million, to cover the entire country.

But with the Pagasa budget for 2005 already cut by the Department of Budget and Management, the weather bureau can only wait until deliberations on its 2006 budget resume around.

As for tropical depression Winnie, Nilo said, "We are not taking any chances. We'll continue to closely monitor the [storm]."

Pagasa has been pushing for a modernization package since 1997 when the service cost would have been P6 billion.

Nilo said Pagasa managed to bring down the amount to P2.7 billion for 2005 but the modernization did not happen.

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In compliance with the Supreme Court resolution dated December 7, 2000 re: MCLE requirement, under the Rules for IBP, before the end of the 3rd compliance period, ALL LAWYERS must complete a minimum of 36 credit units of the IBP and they shall NOT be exempted from the MCLE requirement. Lawyers may avail of our LAST SEMINAR FULL COURSE SCHEDULE before the next deadline. Fill up the attached registration form below and fax this FAX COPY or register online at www.chanrobleslawnet.com. Any inquiry send same number or e-mail to: mcle@chanrobles.com or call telephone number(s) 893-9601 to 07.

Date/Venue (Call Sheet)	Admission Number	Time	Subject Classification/Topic and MCLE Credit Units (CU)	Lecturer
Dec. 7, 2004 Thurs.	AM Session	8:00 AM – 12:00 NN	Updates in Recorded Law – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Dean Ed Vincent S. Alburo
			Environmental Law and the administration of justice – 1 hr. (1 CU)	Atty. Rosendito P. Ledesma
			Updates in Labor Law – 2 hrs. (2 CU)	
	PM Session	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Updates in Legal Ethics – 1 hr. (1 CU)	Atty. Jose John F. Uy
			Updates in Criminal Law – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Justice Hector L. Hofileña
Dec. 8, 2004 Wed.	AM Session	8:00 AM – 12:00 NN	Updates in Criminal Law – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Justice Oscarlito M. Peralta
			Updates in Civil Law – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Justice Oscarlito M. Peralta
	PM Session	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Updates in Civil Law – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Justice Magdadeo E. Macamburog
			Updates in Labor Law – 2 hrs. (2 CU)	Justice Magdadeo E. Macamburog
Dec. 9, 2004 Thurs.	AM Session	8:00 AM – 12:00 NN	Updates in Labor Law – 2 hrs. (2 CU)	Dean Evelina M. Buenagua
			ADR in the Workplace – 1 hr. (1 CU)	Dean Evelina M. Buenagua
	PM Session	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Legal Ethics – 1 hr. (1 CU)	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon
			International & Domestic Arbitration – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
Dec. 10, 2004 Fri.	AM Session	8:00 AM – 12:00 NN	The Law on Private Legal Ethics – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Justice Ruben T. Reyes
	PM Session	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Civil Procedure: The Art of Direct & Cross Examination – 3 hrs. (3 CU)	Justice Noel G. Tijam
			Legal Writing – 1 hr. (1 CU)	Justice Edgardo L. Sandoval
			Legal Writing – 1 hr. (1 CU)	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr.

Yes, I want to attend the: ___series (36 credit unit session); ___ per half day session

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Date/Time: December 7, 8, 9 & 10, 2004 (Tues-Sat) registration to attend/enroll, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Venue: Mr. Warrito Antonio Hall, Provincial Capitol Compound, San Fernando City, Pampanga

Notes: Upon signing up all lawyers register for half day sessions plus lunch for whole day sessions. Inquiries and registration at Secretariat Office, Atty. Alexander Dayrit Jr., Imagen Parking, Free Consultation of the Attorney's Compliance Report and Submission to the MCLE office.

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Registration is ongoing for the remaining days of the 3rd 2004 MCLE Lecture Series to be held on December 4 & 11, 2004 at the Ballroom of Valle Verde Country Club in Pinag-Cruz, Pasig Manila.

Air Force general faces court-martial for graft

By Fe Zamora

MAJ. PRINCE Jerg. Gen. Prospero Oliveros faces a possible court-martial after investigators established system for graft for alleged graft and corruption, a military spokesman said yesterday.

Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pernardi said Oliveros could face a court-martial for alleged irregularities in the acquisition of government funds allowed for various projects" in the 570th Composite Tactical Wing (CTW) in Palawan which Oliveros headed before he was relieved in late September.

The probers also found sufficient evidence against Oliveros on charges of alleged fraud and misuse of funds lined by soldiers' chiefs Orlando and Eric Barraza.

Pernardi said that the Air Force Inspector General had already recommended a court-martial for Oliveros to conduct embossing or an officer and a gentleman, and conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline.

Oliveros would be the third member of the military top brass to face a court-martial after Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, the former military comptroller who was arraigned earlier. [3] for violations of articles of War 96 and 97 for alleged unexplained wealth estimated at P443 million, and Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, ret. at P37.[illegible]

Oliveros was charged before the Sandiganbayan on Friday reportedly for collecting over P1.3 million in cash advances from GSIS Enterprises—an accredited military supplier—in exchange for a supply contract worth P1.7 million which never materialized.

The cash advances were deposited and withdrawn by Oliveros himself in the presence of his wife and retired Army Col. Jerry Allanan on three occasions—Sept. 3, 11 and 17, 2004.

PNP draws up plan to stem rash of killings of journalists

By Christine F. Esguerra

ALARMED by the spate of killings of journalists, the Philippine National Police has prepared a "pro-active" strategy to solve these murders in two personnel fixes.

The core of the new strategy is a database containing "potential victims and potential suspects," according to Dir. Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza, chief of the PNP's Task Force Newsmen.

The idea is to keep investigators informed about journalists in distress and those who might have any reason to have them killed, Mendoza said.

"This way, we won't be in the dark whenever there's a case of a murdered journalist," he explained in an interview with the Inquirer yesterday. "We can even match a victim with a possible suspect in our database and save hours there."

The first half of the database, the "profile of potential victims," will contain documents and initial pieces of information of land-tilling columnists, reporters, broadcasters and other media practitioners receiving death threats, the official said.

Members will inspected "R/SOG," or surveillance procedures inserted in the storage premises of "attack and collect, defend and collect," will also be included in the list. They are absolutely targets of hired killers, he explained.

The other half of the database will include information about "potential suspects" such as gun-for-hire syndicate members, politicians and businessmen known to be fronting gadgets against certain media personalities, gun-running activities and even police and military wallowings.

Mendoza said the task force came up with the idea last September in response to the rash of murders that has made the Philippines one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists.

On Saturday, photojournalist Allan Dizon became the 14th victim this year after a gunman shot him three times near a shopping mall in Cotabato City. He told blended murders brought to 60 the number of journalists murdered since 1986.

Mendoza said the task force hoped [illegible] the two-year slump. Two of those cases have been solved, meaning charges have been filed against suspects.

"Preventing a murder is a difficult act," he said. "The media should really coordinate with us when it comes to the prevention aspect. Their tips to us will more closely unify us in terms of information sharing."

ENTERTAINMENT Metro

Editor Louie C. Camino
Assistant Editor Bernardo G. Yalaoñ

Lea, Richard to be 'active' in trying to have a kid next year

By Marinel R. Cruz

LEA Salonga, who wanted to raise a family with a baby girl, said she and her businessman fiancé Richard Chiea would be "active" in trying to have a child starting next year.

"We'll try to have the winner of it all next year," Lea said at the launch of her "Home for Christmas" album at the Discovery Suites last Thursday. "We can try all we want, but we can only do so much. It's really up to God.

"If it happens next year, then that's great. But we really don't want to pressure ourselves. Besides, it's been hardly a year since we got married," the award-winning actress-singer added. "We still want to enjoy being together."

Lea and Robert were married last July 13 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, California. Lea and Robert live in the East Bay suburbs (Alameda County) in California, she said. On Oahu is "very powerful."

"I love the arranging," said the Broadway and West End star. "Usually shows stall I find that kind of nice. I'm not so startled. I even drive around to accent."

Lea is hosting Manulife's do a special concert for the benefit of Energy Foundation, an organization involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of abused children. The show, also called "Home for Christmas," will be on Dec. 3, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

The Grammy- and Tony-winning singer-actress admitted that she is "very nervous" whenever she thinks about her beautiful show.

"I've never had an encore is scary if you ever," she explained. "I perceived to other concerts and opinions about for other acts."

"Home for Christmas" is a Christmas special that, according to Lea, features "not only songs for Christmas, but of love, family and of being away from home."

Joining Lea in the concert are Ogie Alcasid, The Company's Erik Santos, Christian Bautista and other guests. She further graced February in the musical theater.

Lea said she is pleased with the emergence of young talents like Erik and Christian, both products of one of many talent search in the country.

"Now the torch can be passed," she said. "At least the market can't accuse of only one coaching. It gets boring if everybody does the same thing all the time."

Lea said Erik impressed her with his "very awesome interpretation," and Christian with his "very clear" singing voice.

"I have not rehearsed with Christian yet," she added. "But with Erik, I can say that what's nice about him is that he's willing to learn, from experience. That's important.

"The success of an artist is not based on talent alone. You have to have the right attitude and be hard-working," she said. "In the end, the best will be the one who is working the hardest.

"Personally, I still take voice lessons whenever I can," Lea said. "My voice is not made for belting. I don't make love like Regine [Velasquez]. Sarah [Geronimo] or Sharon Cuneta."

IMPRESSED. The star of Broadway and West End is impressed by Erik Santos' "very awesome interpretation," and Christian Bautista's "very clear" singing voice.

MOST CONTROVERSIAL scene features Christine Vasquez (right) and Luis Alcasid.

Men locking lips, priest struggling with celibacy

By Jocelyn Valle
Correspondent

THE VIRTUES and flirtatious engagements of "All About Him ... Penis Talks," a play on men and sexuality, were revealed not because of opposition from moralist groups but because of inadequate sponsorship.

That is according to Beth dubs Reyes-Rivera, the executive producer of "Penis Talks."

"Since the play's first run last October, we've been aware of people protesting the nature of the play but no calls was ever received to stop the show," she told Inquirer Entertainment in an interview in Filipino. "Our shows in Cebu and Davao were canceled because the theaters weren't enough. The marketing group used up her stress can't stand."

"Penis Talks" stars Christian Vasquez, Luis Alcasid, Pinky Picazo, Carlo Maceda, Jeffrey Hidalgo, Douglas Robinson, William Thio, Ricci Chan, Angelo de Leon and Arnie Davidovich. It is written by Shirley Lee and directed by Joel Lamangan.

It is not unlike Eve Ensler's thought-provoking "Vagina Monologues," which had been staged several times by Monique Wilson's New Voice Company. This time the male organ is used as a metaphor to showcase situations to present what manhood really is.

Men locking lips

The most controversial part of the play, based on media coverage, is the kissing scene between Christian and Luis. "It is essential to the story," Christian explained. "It's about an actress who refuses and regrets expressing his homosexuality. It can be deleted from the play but Christian's instinct will be lost."

He revealed that the scene elicited a lot of strong reactions in the few times that "Penis Talks" was staged last October at the Main Museum. "I guess two smooching guys on stage] is still considered taboo by many Filipinos. Maybe they are still in denial of what's happening nowadays."

He can only and could sibling have on to see the play, said Christian, "because they all live in Bacolod." Christian is still remembered as the Manila-based student in a TV ad who got a lot of support from his father from the Visayas.

Although Christian often locked lips with another man in his first play "Temptation Island," he said he would never get used to leaving men on screen. "I really have to psyche myself up before doing the scene. Kissing a woman comes naturally to me. I still get inhibited when it's with another man. I keep singing/saying lines in drama. I want it to sound real."

Personal decision

Luis feels the same, as it's not his favorite part in "Penis Talks." "I like the one about a molested child," he said. "It's the dramatic highlight of the play. It's very moving.

"The play deals with nudity," Shirley added. "People have to watch it first before they judge it. So, men are not pulled by their penis but [it's] a choice natural it."

Paolo plays a priest who has problems with celibacy and has to make a decision in the end. "It doesn't question the Church," he pointed out. "It's more of a personal dilemma that I believe should be talked about."

Paolo said he's lucky to have broad-minded family and friends who understand his work. Even his pregnant girlfriend, actress Mylene Dizon, is not about his participation in "Penis Talks," he added.

Like Christian, Boots used to be a commercial and runway model before he ventured on to mainstream show business. When they were kids, both Christian and Boots were introverts and both thought that the performing arts were so feminine. In "Penis Talks," they show the other facets of masculinity as they bare their souls as actors.

"Reaction is different from a kid, and I want to be a good actor," said Boots, who looks up to veteran and seasoned performer Joel Torre. "Doing a stage play is very challenging. I also enjoy the instant reaction that we get when we perform. On our opening night, a member of the audience laughed so consistently and it made my day. That's nothing like getting the message across to the audience."

"All About Him ... Penis Talks" will have a re-run on Nov. 30 and Dec. 17 and 18 at the Main Museum.

Dilemma for HIV cases: Motherhood

Turn to page A11

HIV-positive women have several reasons for choosing motherhood over the risks. "Sometimes the reason can be as present as 'motherhood is the essence of being a woman,'" said Feldon.

Short-lived motherhood

Or, in the case of former domestic helper and factory worker Anna Reyes (not her real name), 34, it could simply be a leap of faith. Reyes announced AIDS from a blood transfusion when she had surgery for an ectopic pregnancy.

Asked by government doctors how she decided to take care of her child given her condition, she said, "Siempre naman ang Diyos (God will save me through)." Besides, she added, "Hiling niya sa kin papanoon niya ng panan. Bakit naman niya pagpaguguhan? (He willed this so He'll take charge. Why should we second-guess Him?)"

The women's dilemma has not been made any easier by the government's lack of support, said Taylor.

"Health workers in poorer, more hospitals will try to discourage you from having the baby," she said, recalling how she was asked bluntly: "Who will take care of your child when you die?" To which she bravely Taylor replied, "Of, tabot naman ang ang magiging mamamatay ko (I just pray it's my lung says ung anak lahat. Hindi ako (I just pray it's my lung says ung anak lahat. Hindi ako will die eventually. Does that mean we shouldn't have children at all?)"

Taylor said she even knew of 15-year-old HIV-positive mother who was found to have a tubal ligation by doctors in a government hospital. "They asked the parents to sign the consent form," she added.

Official position

The government's official position is that it is the right and prerogative of HIV-positive mothers to decide on their pregnancy, classified children. "But everything must be an informed and conscious decision. The women should know the risks and how to reduce them," he said.

Both Taylor and Reyes decided not to breast-feed so mother's milk contains very high viral loads that could be transmitted to the child. Both also took antiretroviral (ARV) drugs during their pregnancies since this medication, meant to control the HIV virus, reduces the risk of transmission from mother to child from 40 percent to 8 percent, according to the DOH-C official.

But the government can only advise the women about the risks and leave the decision to them. HIV-positive women who breastfeed have a 15-percent chance of transmitting the virus to their infants, yet some HIV-positive mothers still breast-feed, Feldon said.

"What can we do?" he said. "What if there's no source of clean water for the infant to bathe or they can't afford to buy it? Sometimes it's a matter of hard choices."

He acknowledged that it was the government's obligation to meet the medical needs of HIV-positive pregnant women despite a very limited budget.

"Since we are informed about the pregnancy we pursue a program of giving her AZT from the 32th week of pregnancy to actual delivery, after delivery, the child is monitored by caregivers at three, six, nine, 12 and 18 months for signs of the AIDS virus," Feldon said.

Screening for AIDS

Feldon built to HIV-positive mothers may turn out to be just two at birth because they still have their mother's antibodies. In 18 months, they can revert to being negative.

So far, according to Taylor and Reyes, all their children have been found negative for the virus.

HIV POSITIVE: Ana Reyes (not her real name) speaks before students of the Concepcion High School about AIDS awareness and prevention at the Jose R. Sanchez Health Center in Barangay Sto. Ana, Pasong, Hora Manila. — RAFT CRUZ

But the government's AZT program has been spotty at best. Feldon admitted that they could only give the medication whenever it was available.

"At the San Lazaro Hospital, we enhanced all the means to prescribe drugs which are very expensive—from P2,000 a month for generics and as much as P60,000 a month for branded medications. But this is still on a contingency basis. It's also a lifetime regimen. Once you start taking antiretroviral drugs, you can't stop. Otherwise, the virus will build up resistance to the medication," he said.

One option is to buy the drugs in bulk because that would be cheaper. However, as Feldon explained: "It is difficult to project the country's needs. Only one out of 10,000 pregnant women is HIV-positive. How do we find that woman unless she reports her HIV status, if she is even aware of it? Plastic surgeons manayem yung 10,000 para kunyari yung isang HIV-positive. (How do we know 10,000 women are just to find the one who is HIV-positive?)"

"We can't even do risk assessment among married women ... how can you tell when they may be at risk because of their husbands? It's like telling them that their spouses are womanizers."

What the government plans to do, said Feldon, is to use seed money to buy ARVs and give these to people with AIDS (PWAs) based on their capacity to pay. Others who can't afford to buy the drugs can be given a free ride. Whatever funds are realized from the drug sales can then be used to buy more medication.

"Nadiskarte lang ang pondo (We involve the funds)," said Feldon. "If some, there's an ethical issue involved. What happens to the PWAs who when they've no more budget for the drugs?"

Which is why Taylor has decided not to take any ARVs at all. "I can't be assured of a steady supply of medication so why should I start a regimen that might even be harmful when I stop?" asked the mother of two boys, aged 9 and 7, and a girl aged 6.

NGOs to the rescue

Other PWAs who are on medication have turned to NGOs whose main advocacy is the provision of AIDS. Among them is UNAIDS, the main advocate for global action on AIDS.

The UNAIDS, according to country coordinator Dr. Ma. Lissa Bautista, uses the Global Fund for AIDS to give support to counselling TB and malaria—the most common opportunistic diseases that ravage PWAs—in its selected sites in the country: the San Lazaro Hospital, Philippine General Hospital, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, the Davao Medical Center, the Baguio Regional Training Hospital and the Visayas Islands Medical Center in Cebu.

"These are where more HIV-positive people converge and where they can expect care and support," Bautista said.

The UNAIDS provides "catalytic funds to seed money for HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities," she added, "but this is not a dole. We cannot afford to provide lifetime maintenance."

Earlier this month, the UNAIDS through the WHO, facilitated the bulk importation of drugs using the Global Fund money.

Recently, too, according to Bautista, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has agreed to support 14 countries, including the Philippines, in "identifying key leaders in politics, business, the media and the church to scale up a response to the pandemic."

Support needed

International NGOs on AIDS provide free medication to volunteer AIDS advocates of the Positive Action Foundation of the Philippines Inc. (PAPI), according to its program and development manager Jose Bautista.

"This is not an incentive for the volunteers, just a recognition of their selfless commitment to the cause of AIDS," Bautista said. Most on the third row, the program has already benefited 24 PWAs, seven of whom are HIV-positive mothers.

"We give our scholars' ARVs as long as their physicians say they need it, but we tell them they are a lifetime supply. They should also start saving up and finding jobs now so they can buy their own medication later," he said.

Aside from the ARVs, PAPI provides temporary shelter for PWAs who temporarily in Manila for their regular checkups and monitoring. Allowed families of the PWAs can also find support at PAPI's Ako Kanayo, Buhay Kaibigan and Buhay Kalinagan centers, said Bautista.

But Taylor and Reyes both know that government and NGO support can only go so far. They have told their children about their condition and have prepared them for any eventuality.

Reyes, who makes stuffed toys for a living, has told her bonchic son MDDs that she'd like her two girls, aged 9 and 7, in his adopted, "protected" by a family who has other children and are sensitive to HIV and AIDS.

Indeed, they may not be typical mothers, but like the best of them, Taylor and Reyes want to offer their children a better future.

THE POSITIVE Action Foundation of the Philippines may be contacted at 328-9333, 409-2911 and 852-6239.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 30, 2004
1st Week of Advent

1st Reading: Rom 10:9-18
Gospel: Mt 4:18-22

As Jesus walked by the lake of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. He said to them, 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him.

He went on from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them. At once they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Commentary:

In the first three gospels duchess is our mentioned except in lists of the twelve. But in John's gospel he appears three times, and in each case he is introduced as 'one of his disciples' or 'one of the disciples whom Jesus loved.' Then in 21:2-8 he is intriguing forward a key and the lines and two fish and in 21:20-23 he is bringing some doubt to Jesus. Meanwhile he himself managed to remain almost invisible. In John's gospel, Jesus lived and died without anyone ever calling him by his name. Even in Acts 13:40, 'If it was Rita, not Matthew, who came to the Gentiles' house of da, 'Peter, James and John.' He is regularly described as 'the brother of Simon Peter' (Mt 10:2; Lk 6:14). He nowhere does he draw any attention about this. It is rare enough to find people who are willing to take the second place, to play second fiddle. How good it would be if we only did this people could remember about you (also you brought people to Jesus).

(Divine Publications Inc., 4 Skyway St., 10th Floor, Diliman, Quezon City, 10 Phone: 911-5181, 911-5182, 911-5183, 911-5184, 911-5185, 911-5186, 911-5187, 911-5188, 911-5189, 911-5190, 911-5191, 911-5192, 911-5193, 911-5194, 911-5195, 911-5196, 911-5197, 911-5198, 911-5199, 911-5200, 911-5201, 911-5202, 911-5203, 911-5204, 911-5205, 911-5206, 911-5207, 911-5208, 911-5209, 911-5210, 911-5211, 911-5212, 911-5213, 911-5214, 911-5215, 911-5216, 911-5217, 911-5218, 911-5219, 911-5220,

Across the NATION

Caravan starts vs NorthRail project

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, ... Urban poor groups began their caravan to villages along the abandoned tracks of the Philippine National Railways in Pampanga and Bulacan to block the government plans to demolish 20,000 houses there to give way to the Manila-Clark NorthRail project.

In Pampanga, the two-day caravan "Lakbay Riles" sought to inform settlers in the province that the government had no funds for relocation. Also, by-laws, spokesperson of the Pinlakasan ng Mamamayan sa Riles (Pamariles), said.

The project, locally said, should be opposed because it "only intends to fast-track the entry of foreign capital in Clark (Special Economic Zone) and Central Luzon."

He said at least 10,000 structures living along the PNR tracks in Pampanga would be displaced by the project.

Jacobo said officials of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) had submitted hazy budget for relocation program related to the NorthRail.

The caravan, which began 7 a.m. at Barangay Mesalipit in San Fernando, is expected to end in Barangay Palatong Bata in Angeles City today.

Vice President Noli de Castro, concurrent HUDCC chair, said in a visit to Pampanga in October that the government had adequate funds to support the relocation of 44,000 families from Caloocan City to Clark in Pampanga.

He did not mention the budget or the cost of the relocation, which was the government's counterpart to the project funded by a loan from Japan.

In Cainta said the track on both sides of the PNR tracks remained the property of the government.

He said the government has adopted an "in-city" relocation policy, meaning the families would be transferred to a site within the city or town they were living in to keep them near their places of work.

The continuation of the P30-million railway began on Nov. 8 despite the controversy in the bidding process.

Days weeks ago, the city council of San Fernando passed a resolution asking the HUDCC to present a relocation plan for settlers in the city. The council has yet to receive a reply from the HUDCC.

In Bulacan, urban poor groups in the province called the NorthRail project a "fake modernization and development project" of the government.

They said the government has yet to present concrete programs for the relocation and livelihood of about 16,000 families living along the PNR tracks in Bulacan who would be displaced by the project.

Residents living along the PNR tracks joined the march-protest against the project on Sunday and Monday. Reporter Grejaneil Gervasio Reyes, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ANGEL OF THE NIGHT
Ceremonies marking the lighting of a Christmas tree at the Bayan Country Club were made more stirring by the presence of children dressed as, anything like, angels.

Threats force tight security in Cebu paper

By Jocelyn Nagaddan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY ... The Freeman, a news daily here, has tightened security at its editorial office after an unidentified person called up its newsroom warning that somebody in the newspaper's news staff would follow the fate that befell its photographer Allan Dizon, who was killed on Monday.

The editorial office of The Freeman, which is located along Mendiola and Jakosalem Street here, received the first threatening call on Sunday and another one yesterday.

At around 9 a.m. on Sunday, The Freeman's telephone operator received a call from a "very angry man" who declared that Dizon would not be the last to be murdered, according to the paper's day editor, Jeanne Sanchez Bruce.

Dizon, 30, was shot three times by a lone assailant on the street just outside JM City at 6:50 p.m. on Saturday. He died one and a half hour later at the Cebu City Medical Center.

The second threatening call made at 11:20 a.m. yesterday forced the management to bring the threats to the attention of the Cebu City Police Office, Bruce said.

"Hamubo ra mong unang ako (I will shoot dead all of you)," was the threat made yesterday by the caller, said Bruce, quoting the telephone operator.

She said it was possible that it could just be a prank by someone taking advantage of Dizon's murder but she said The Freeman do not want to take any chances.

After the second threat, Bruce said they immediately requested for additional security guards from Jose Cuilla, the chair of the paper's board of directors.

Bruce said the paper has also started implementing strict policies on visitors.

Two policemen from the Mobile Patrol Group went to the paper's newsroom yesterday. The policemen advised them to have the incident recorded at the blotter of the Mabolo Police Station, which has jurisdiction over the Mendiola area.

Bruce said The Freeman have not affected their work although their reporters had been instructed to be very careful.

Philippine National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay has meanwhile ordered the Cebu police to fast-track their investigation of the killing of Dizon.

Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, the incumbent chair of the Central Visayas Regional Peace and Order Council, urged the police to solve this case as soon as possible and to put an end to the series of attacks against the members of the media.

SURVIVOR
A teenager survives what is left of his family's and neighbor's homes after disaster brought by Typoon "Winding" struck Dinglasan town in Aurora province. Residents of the town blamed the flash floods and landslides that wreaked havoc on the town on illegal logging.

Marijuana legalization backer says gov't should pick on shabu

CHUNGALAO

BAGUIO CITY—Rigoberto Bay-Johnson Chungalao said the government campaign to stop the cultivation and distribution of marijuana has been an expensive and tiring job.

Chungalao, who proposed the legalization of marijuana use for medical purposes, said the government should instead focus its attention on stopping the proliferation of shabu in the country.

"The drive to eradicate marijuana appears Don Quixote and tasking enormous vital resources to the government. The police and the military in Benguet move more undercover in their efforts as they are now more concentrated on the more dangerous drug called shabu," he said.

He said the government should differentiate between "hard" and "soft" drugs.

"Marijuana is a soft drug unlike shabu which is a hard drug that has absolutely no medicinal value," Chungalao said.

Cordillera supplies almost 70 percent of marijuana in the country, the Philippines, according to the 2004 United Nations World Drug Report, is one of the three top cannabis producers in Southeast Asia. The other countries are Thailand and Cambodia.

Chungalao said poverty is the biggest reason Cordillerans get involved in marijuana production.

"It cannot be denied that most of those involved in the illegal production and traffic of marijuana come from the poverty-stricken families from remote areas where there are no roads, irrigation, disaster-generating entertainers or viable livelihood services," he said.

He said most of those jailed for marijuana trafficking and production come from poor families in the Cordillera.

Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Cordillera police director, said as of October, only 12 villages in the region were "drug-affected."

He said marijuana plants worth P660.4 million were destroyed and illegal drugs worth P1.7 million were confiscated in the region from January to September this year.

But the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency here said the hardships they had to face in finding and seizing marijuana.

It took two days on foot to get to a plantation and another three days to bring the marijuana to the town or village center, a PDEA agent said.

He said that Jasmin plants that they could not carry were burned on site. So only those seen usually arrested because they had their own guards who alerted them of the presence of government raiding teams.

Chungalao dismissed claims that his bill would revive the marijuana industry.

He said the cultivation of marijuana for medical purposes would be "confined to designated areas as may be determined by the police and the military."

"This simply means that we identify the area where it can be planted and produced and identify and license those involved in the production, delivery and sale in identified and licensed medical laboratories," he said.

Analie Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Aussie, Pinoy scientists step up agri research

DAVAO CITY—Australian and Filipino scientists have intensified their efforts on agricultural research that would strengthen the bond between the Philippines and Australia, Australian Embassy said.

Dr. Kirsty Pullman, now chief of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), inaugurated the newly renovated conference by uniting the country recently and meeting with his local counterparts, a statement from the embassy said.

ACIAR, an Australian government agency, shares the results of its research with developing countries such as the Philippines.

One of the research at ACIAR has been conducting is on the effects of soil erosion and runoff from agricultural lands, Bernie Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Mysterious disease destroying seaweeds

OZAMIS CITY—Seaweed farmers in the Panguil Bay are baffled by a mysterious disease causing their crops to rot and leaving them heavily indebted.

This observed in Sarang Lanao did barely about two years ago, the disease, called "white rot," has already destroyed close to P5 million worth of seaweed stocks in at least 12 coastal villages of Sherrifa Cagay (Tubod) district in Iligan Pedro said.

Pedro said because of the magnitude of the disease's effect, seaweed farmers have decided to stop production.

A number of traders, who financed the seaweed growing through production loans here, have also folded up operations, in part because of lack of seaweed stocks but mostly because of the losses prompted of managing their investments.

At first Pedro, PMM, coordinator of the Save Nature Society, urged the local government to study the socio-economic impact of the disease as a basis for handing out economic assistance to the farmers.

Pedro said she fears that in the aftermath of the disease fish farmers, who raised their bucks or dealt out to fishing methods to harvest the seaweeds farming, could find economic solace in their old fishery methods.

Pedro said there is still no conclusive finding on the nature of white rot disease, which is locally known as "soy-soy."

When infected by the disease, seaweed stocks become pale and disintegrate.

The effect of the disease is observed to be more serious in sea weed farms near the shores.

A recent water quality analysis done by a multisector team from non-government organizations and the provincial government found that salinity and dissolved oxygen levels in the city's seaweed farms fall below the standard values.

Seaweed culture requires a salinity level of 32 to 35 parts per thousand (ppt) but the highest salinity level in the city's farms was only 27 ppt.

Except for one site near the pier, dissolved oxygen in the rest of the city's coastal areas fell short of the 5 milligram per liter standard values set by the environment department for marine waters.

The team's report attributed the low dissolved oxygen value to the high siltation rate in the bay, while the low salinity level was traced to the large volume of freshwater discharge, mostly from river systems that empty into the Panguil Bay.

The water quality study also noted an "alarmingly high concentration" of oil and grease in the city's northern coast, indicating that "the water is contaminated."

It was not, however, determined if the oil and grease contamination has a direct relation to the white rot disease outbreak but the report warns of its toxic effects on marine life including seaweeds.

Francisco Sturm, municipal agriculture officer of Tubod town in Lanao del Norte, said the province has assisted farmers of evolving their stocks in Tubod, or PHR fertilizer, is worth looking into as determining the reasons for the disease outbreak. Ryan O. Rosario, PDI Mindanao Bureau

360 Maguindanao families receive gov't food coupons

SE PERONUK, Maguindanao—At least 360 families here became beneficiaries of the government's food for work program.

The beneficiaries received at least P1,200 worth of food coupon per family.

"In exchange for the food coupon, the beneficiaries would render community service," said Sultan Kuray, secretary of the social welfare service in the autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said during the program's launching last week.

The 38-year-old Maguindanao, a father since 12 years old, he would put his skills to use because of the community service.

"When I start rendering community service, the government would discover my skills to carpentry and construction, by then hopefully the LGU would hire me as regular worker," Sadiqua said.

He said the food coupon might not solve his family's daily food problem but said it could help a lot.

Beginning this month, Sadiqua and 359 other project beneficiaries would receive P1,200 worth of coupon every month until June.

Mayor Saidona Dimaraan said his office would choose engineering office contractual workers from among the beneficiaries.

Kuray said aside from Maguindanao, Lake was also identified as a beneficiary province under the food for work program.

Rhoda Ng, assistant social welfare secretary, said the project is not actually a new endeavor. Edwin G. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Negros Oriental has most cases of domestic violence in region

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental ranked No. 1 in the number of reported cases of violence against women and children in Central Visayas from January to November this year.

Irene Jaup, Bendahin Abellon, head of the Women and Children Concern Desk in the province, said she learned this information in a recent regional forum held in Cebu City.

Abellon said that while this could no longer mean the figures for the other provinces in the region, the win in Negros Oriental had the most recorded cases over the last 11 months, with 704 cases of violence against women and children from the last cases and 20 municipalities of the province.

Of the number, 108 were rape cases, with 579 of the victims children.

The report from January to November also showed that of the 704 cases of violence against women and children, 486 were against women and 218 were against children.

In the case of women, the characteristic outcome was slight injuries and physical injuries, which accounted for 366 cases, while in the case of children 128 were involved physical injuries.

Alcmp S. Arnaiz-ado, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

HOLIDAY WORK
Workers race with time to finish giant lanterns that are to be displayed in Bacolod City's central business district in preparation for the holiday season.

Town water supplier faces suit over gastro outbreak

By Jhanna Napallacar
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Cebu provincial government is going to take legal action against the water district in Medellin that was blamed for the gastroenteritis outbreak in the town that has taken ill at least 239 residents and killed two persons since Nov. 22.

Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, who went to Medellin town on Sunday, was alarmed upon seeing the leaking, rusty and corroded pipes of the Medellin Water District (MWD), which is operating under the Local Utilities Water Administration.

The Integrated Provincial Health office had earlier confirmed that the gastroenteritis outbreak was caused by coliform contaminated water due to the leaking pipes of the MWD.

"I am going to look into our lawyers to study the possibility of charging them with gross negligence or the summary or probably even criminal negligence because they are operating in Medellin for ten years already," Garcia said yesterday.

The MWD supplies water to the entire town of Medellin, about 80.2 km southwest of Cebu City, which is known for its beautiful beaches and resorts.

Residents, not tourists

Because of the gastroenteritis outbreak, tourists were reportedly leaving and withdrawing from the different resorts in the town.

But Garcia said she was more alarmed about the health conditions of the residents in the town than the outbreak's effect on tourism.

Garcia also asked the Provincial Legal Office to also study the possibility of the municipal government taking over the operations of the town's water district.

Garcia said for a long a time now, MWD has been collecting very high rates from its customers, with the minimum rate of P90 per 10 cubic meters. In the adjacent town of Bantayan, however, consumers are only paying a P35 minimum rate for water supplied by the local government-run water system.

Wrong priorities

"There's a big disparity in the rates now," Garcia added.

Garcia said the MWD has a monthly income of P536,000 but it reportedly has the beautiful edifice of its building rather than improving its system and its distribution lines.

"They are collecting on a monthly basis a total of P536,000 a month, and yet, they have not been able to replace their leaking, corroded and rusty pipes," the governor added.

Garcia got angry when she saw the beautiful building of the MWD, which reportedly cost P5.09 million. In contrast, the water district only spent P 35,000 for the repair of its pipes.

The governor immediately demanded from MWD manager Richard Sangcad that the water district replace their leaking and rusty pipes and provide assistance to the families of the coliform victims.

The residents of Medellin have been feeling their drinking water since the outbreak began.

Another way of making sure the water supply is safe was to chlorinate it, but town residents have not been provided with chlorine tablets and have not been taught the process.

2 children die in Pampanga fire

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Two children aged 6 and 7 were killed in a fire that broke out in Barangay Sapang in Mabalacat, Pampanga, on Sunday, police said.

Supt. Emmanuel Arnold, provincial fire marshal, identified the victims as Marlon and Mimi Joy Pamintuan.

Arnold said the children's parents were out of their house when the fire broke out.

He said the father was in a neighbor's house watching a boxing bout on television while the mother was playing cards in another neighbor's house.

Another child of the couple, a boy who survived the fire, said a man entered their house and set it on fire at about 2:30 p.m. He could not identify the suspect.

The Pamintuan district fire station responded to the call at 3:05 p.m. Damage was estimated at P50,000.

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4 top DND officials replaced

Front page A1

"The President has not made any announcement. She has not even discussed this [revamp]," he said.

Bunye clarified that he stated earlier was merely the "general principle" that Ms Arroyo had the prerogative to reorganize the government at any time.

If such a revamp should occur, he added, this was to make the bureaucracy more efficient and attuned to Ms Arroyo's program of government.

"As to who are involved in particular, are matter esp at this time," Bunye said.

In Manila, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Ms Arroyo had approved the replacements of four defense undersecretaries and that they would move out of their offices by the end of the week.

The appointment papers of the new defense undersecretaries were signed last week by Ms Arroyo, who left it to Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz to make the announcement, Ermita told reporters.

Ermita only mentioned lawyer Nestor Cruz and Jose Antonio Santos like current undersecretary for policy plans and special concerns) as the new appointees.

4 to be replaced

He did not say when Cruz, who was previously on the staff of Secretary Avelino Cruz when the latter was presidential adviser for legal affairs, and Santos would go operationally.

Ermita confirmed that four defense undersecretaries would be replaced. They were Atty. Gen. Rafaelito Barayoga, undersecretary for Armed Forces operations; Brig. Gen. Feliciano Sarol, finance and administration; Cesar Bello, retired agronomist, and Cosme de Guzman, internal control.

Ermita claimed he was unaware of any shakeup in other governmental agencies. "I have no personal knowledge of any official moving out after December," he said.

New faces

Palace sources earlier said Ms Arroyo planned to have two new faces in her economic team, but Ermita implied he was personally satisfied with the way Cabinet economic team had been performing its job.

"They are very competent people," Ermita said. "If there are changes, these has to be some good reasons for it."

DND spokesperson Rosario Blandongui said the revamp in the undersecretary would widen its more civilian-to-top positions.

Blandongui said new appointments had been signed by Malacañang and the list of new officials would be announced today.

Expected to be on the list are Andrés Cruz, who will be the undersecretary for public, legal and legislative affairs, and a yet unnamed lawyer who will assume the position of undersecretary for armed forces operations, Mattiangco said.

Veteran in

A DND source said lawyer Rosario Velasco would be named undersecretary for finance and administration. "Her appointment papers have been signed," the source said.

The source said Ricardo San Andres, who was assistant to Defense Secretary Cruz, has been promoted to a possible replacement for Sec. De Guzman has been transferred to the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission.

Blandongui could not confirm the appointments of Velasco, who served in the department during the tenure of Secretary Orlando Mercado.

But Sec. Andres "was likely ... [because] he has been there since [his] office was created [last year]," he said.

Blandongui said Barayoga and Sarol were not to relieve soon, forgoing the turnover. The two undersecretaries had both served as generals in the Armed Forces before they joined the DND.

Malacañang also said Santos would be retained as undersecretary for policy, plans and special concerns, along with Bello.

His statement would seem to contradict Ermita, who told Palace reporters that Bello would be replaced.

Undersecretary for Joint Defense Assessment Ernesto Carolina will be retained, but his office will be renamed Office of the Defense Reform Agenda, Mattiangco said.

Santos, Bello and Carolina also served as generals in the AFP before they were assigned to the DND.

All agencies under review

Bunye brushed off reports of a planned massive government revamp when he said on radio on Sunday that "all the different government agencies are under constant review, constant reorganization."

He said on DZRH radio that the pool of any government revamp was to make state agencies more efficient and "responsive to public service."

Mixed signals

Pressed by reporters covering Ms Arroyo's stay in Laos if more changes in the government were forthcoming, Bunye said, "What we are saying is that the President has a prerogative to reorganize the organization ... We see just having a general rule that the President has that prerogative."

Apparently unaware of what Ermita and Mañalac were telling reporters in Manila, Bunye also said Ms Arroyo had not given any specific instructions on the supposed overhaul of the defense establishment.

He said any changes that might happen would be undertaken to make the agency in tune with the President's long term objectives and to make it more efficient.

"What is important, and I believe that has been reiterated by the President, [is] we are part of a team and we have our goals. Those are stated in the medium term development plan and executive's directive to further expand achieving those goals," he said.

Sen. Ralph Recto said he hoped that the new economic managers Ms Arroyo would appoint would be able to contribute to the government effort to modernize such needed economic reforms.

"I welcome the revamp because there must be a new beginning," Recto said, "and the Senate ways and means committee, said is a phase in revision.

Recto said Ms Arroyo "needs a different type of Cabinet today because of the magnitude of the economic problems [confronting] the country."

He hoped that the new people coming in, especially those who would be part of the President's economic team, would be credible and could contribute to the reform program. With a report from Christina O. Avendaño

White Christmas / New Year in BEIJING or Shopping Spree in SHANGHAI

THE MARCO POLO
THE ROYAL CAMELLIAN
Shangri-La Hotel
Ramada Plaza
Manila Hotel

BY	Beijing 4 or 5 Days	Tue & Sat
BY	Shanghai 4 Days	Thurs, Fri & Sat
2Y5N	Beijing, Shanghai 6 Days	Sat
3Y	Shanghai, Beijing, Xian, Guilin 8-10 Days	Sat

HARBIN Ice & Snow Festival

BY1 Manila-Ice & Snow Festival 4 Days
BG3 Manila, Dalian or Shanghai 4 Days
BG4 Manila, Beijing 7 Days
BG Northeast Ice & Snow Festival 8 Days

PANDA TRAVEL SERVICE INC.

Ex-GMA publicist gets Cabinet appointment

Front page A2

on Overseas Filipinos. And the last of these is the aide to opposition leader Edgardo Angara—in his nominee—now her Cabinet.

"Edsang and salvosure he's bringing with him," Ms Arroyo said of the nature of her proposal to the president of the biggest opposition party, the Lakas ng Kaluluwang Pilipino.

Angara himself has said he met with Ms Arroyo on Dec. 20 to discuss her offer of entry and reconciliation. But he said he was not leaving the Senate, where his term will end in 2007.

"We've had talks about entry," Ms Arroyo said at a dinner with buyers, executives and senior editors last week before she left for Laos, where she is now attending the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

But she put no one course...the opposition appointee must support her programs because Cabinet members serve at the pleasure of the Chief Executive.

Ms Arroyo said she signed Ang's appointment papers before she left for Chile to attend the Nov. 20-21 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit.

She said Ang, who will hold Cabinet rank, would undertake "specific projects" for the benefit of the more than 7 million Filipinos working overseas.

No conflict with Noli

Ang's position will not conflict with that of Vice President Noli de Castro, who is concurrent presidential adviser on Overseas Filipino Workers, she said.

Ang is a long-time public relations practitioner who had worked for Ms Arroyo's electoral campaigns since she was a senator.

But Ms Arroyo emphasized that, like other Cabinet officials, Ang must divest himself of his business interests before he could assume his post. "He has to follow all the rules," she said.

Ang said he had not received his appointment papers. He had earlier confirmed reports that he would be appointed to the OSF post.

Ang: 'I will divest'

"I accept the appointment. It's an honor to serve the President and the country at this time of economic crisis," Ang said in a phone interview.

"Personal and political differences should be set aside and one must rise above personal interests so that we can help our country," he said.

He said: "I will do what needs to be done, I will divest."

Ang cast as "Ibu Manila Times' newspaper columnist Amelia Fajardo named after the newspaper, such as The Manila Times School of Journalism, Manila Times Skills Institute and Manila Times Language Institute.

He also owns a trading firm, Dial Trading, and Dentals Manila, a real estate company, and is also known to own a fleet of expensive vehicles.

AMD

The COF was previously attached to the Department of Foreign Affairs, but Ms Arroyo transferred it to her office. She had said she noticed that the commission had not been doing much beyond giving out awards to outstanding overseas Filipinos and she wanted it do something more relevant to the welfare.

She said Dr Castro's responsibility is his job concerning OFWs was only to give her advice.

Ms Arroyo did not specify the Cabinet post awaited Angara or his constituency, saying she was not sure to negotiate the details.

The President said last month that she had asked Angara and his party to join her in a "covenant of national unity."

Bush admired Ople

Ms Arroyo told the business staff that she was not averse to appointing someone from the opposition to her Cabinet.

She cited the case of the late Ben Wise Ople, an opposition member who she appointed Secretary of Industry in 2000 and who went on to advance her foreign policy.

Even US President George W Bush, whom she talked to over dinner at the Apec summit, remembered Ople very well, she said. "President Bush said he admired him," she said.

Ms Arroyo said she could not have someone in her Cabinet who was opposed not just to her but to her policies and programs. She cited a politician from the Visayas who she said she would not appoint to the Cabinet.

No horse-trading

Angara, who was presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.'s chief political adviser during the May elections, said any cooperation with the administration would only be for the sake of "country and government" and not for himself.

If Ms Arroyo offered him a post, he would place it on in a nominee from his party, he said, adding: "I will not leave the Senate."

Referring to Poe's electoral protest against Ms Arroyo's poll victory, Angara said that to this day "we have an election protest continuing."

He said this was what I had in mind [when] I met with the President, not home-making but the sharing of the burden of serious government across the board, and only on concerned and principled lines," the LDP chief said on the phone.

He said he made it clear to Speaker Jose de Venecia, who had arranged the meeting, that what he envisioned was "not a finding of favors but a principled framework within which any cooperation by the opposition with the government should take place.

"We have done this primarily from sliding line," Angara said. "We've got up there. It's not because I want something in return. So there is. There is no childish. I'm beyond that at ready."

He said the nation's leaders "owe it to the people, to our children to give them a better future, a better life. That is non-negotiable."

Angara said that when he met with Ms Arroyo, he was not representing the entire political opposition, although Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. also expressed willingness to cooperate with Malacañang so long as it would identify the nature of the cooperation.

"I'm prepared to do that [drop my pet hate duties] just to see to it that the country would get back on the right track," Angara said.

Asked what kind of cooperation Ms Arroyo expected in return from the LDP, he said: "So what may and here, that was left on the table."

He said that since their meeting in Ms Arroyo's Forbes Park residence in Makati City last month, he had yet to meet with her again.

A different song'

"She's in Laos now. So it's up to her to conclude [talks]," he said.

Starting the runs to Congress which proclaimed Ms Arroyo as the winner of the May 10 presidential elections over opposition charges of massive vote fraud, Angara had projected a strong, nonconfrontational stance.

Angara had said then that Congress, acting as a national canvassing body, had ostensibly failed its constitutional duty and "abandoned our people."

"When it should have shown the way for future elections, it looked the other way," he had said of Congress. "The body has lost its moral and legal bearing. I have no wish to be part of this travesty of the will of the Filipino voter. I have no wish to be called to account by the judgment of history and that of our people. I vote no to the simulacrum's report and recommendation."

Recalling this day, Angara said that he and Pimentel had led the real opposition in a "good fight"—a fight that continues to shape how the public views the government today."

SANSUI
Entertaining the World
7,200W PMPO
RZ-9950AVD
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3,000W PMPO
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PMC-D611
PMC-D333

RP wants to negotiate release of Tarongoy with Iraqi captors

THE GOVERNMENT said yesterday it wanted to negotiate the release of Robert Tarongoy to Iraq, but has so far failed to make direct contact with the kidnappers.

Tarongoy, a construction worker employed by a South Korean company that has a contract with the Iraqi government, was abducted by armed men on Nov. 1 while driving to his workplace in Baghdad.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert said the government was trying to establish contact with the kidnappers.

"We have been trying to establish contact with the kidnappers but we have not been successful in establishing contact with them," Albert said.

Albert said the government was willing to negotiate with the kidnappers for the release of Tarongoy.

"We are willing to negotiate with the kidnappers for the release of Tarongoy," she said.

Albert said the government was also trying to establish contact with the kidnappers through the Iraqi government.

"We are also trying to establish contact with the Iraqi government through the Iraqi government

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Bueno

Ukraine top court convenes over crisis

KIEV—Ukraine's top court was due to convene Thursday to try and resolve a weakening political crisis over a disputed vote, amid mass demonstrations, threats of separatism and vitriolic rhetoric between Moscow and Western capitals.

The crucial supreme court hearing came as the pro-Moscow opposition leading Viktor Yushchenko set out a tough new list of demands that included the immediate dismissal of pro-Moscow Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko and the creation of a coalition government.

Thousands of supporters from both camps remained in the major building on the political train on all by the Nov. 21 vote that officially handed victory to Yanukovich ostensibly eight days of many rallies.

"We are here to support our president, the judges must see the will of the people," said Igor Khomyn from the pro-Yushchenko constituency of Ternopil.

"There is huge pressure on the court, they are threatening the judges and offer top facts (officials) of dollars," he charged.

Analysts say the court, whose judges serve for life, has chosen independence from the government in the past and could once opposition calls to annul the election results.

However it is not clear how long the hearing could last—Yushchenko has demanded a new vote be held on Dec. 12—nor whether its decision will in her wishes the standoff.

Analysts say the election was fraudulent and annul in part or in full the results but do not have the jurisdiction to call for a new vote.

That can only be done by a central election commission which has much limited victory to the pro-Moscow candidate And Yanukovich's camp has already called the supreme court hearing illegitimate.

The western country against the backdrop of threats from the Russian-speaking east industrial heartland and southern coast that makes up two-thirds of this nation of 48 million or formal call and hand its allegiance to Moscow.

Yanukovich attended a rally in the key coal-mining city of Donetsk on Sunday during which Ukraine's current life leaders agreed to set up an autonomy referendum should Yushchenko come to head the state.

"Either we are capable of preserving this stability and peace in our state, or everything will collapse and very rapidly," Yanukovich warned leaders of the Russian-speaking region.

The Donetsk administration itself later scheduled ad hoc. It referendum on changing in status to a "republic" with greater autonomy from the central government follows.

"If our people were announcing decisions can tell in no current how it," Elena Bondarenko, spokesperson for regional administration in Donetsk, said.

Yushchenko countered in Kiev that that the Russian-speaking region didn't side Moscow but to be punished for threatening a break-off and the rebel governors dismissed.

"We demand the opening of a criminal inquiry against the separatist governors," Yushchenko told the orange-clad flag-waving crowd.

Latest opposition lawmaker Yulia Timoshenko rallied on outgoing President Leonid Kuchma to rush Yanukovich as well. AFP

HIDDEN CITY
A view of a route in Mad'in Saleh, northwest Saudi Arabia taken Nov. 16. Madain Saleh was the world's second ancient religious capital after Petra. Another, a spectacular mixed city lies almost hidden in the northern deserts of Saudi Arabia. AFP

Strong quake hurts 13 as Japan waits for big one

TOKYO—A powerful earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale injured 13 people Monday in northern Japan in a new sign of seismic activity a month after the country's deadliest tremor in a decade.

The quake jolted Japan's mainnorthern island of Hokkaido at 5:32 a.m., temporarily knocking out power to nearly 1,000 homes and prompting a one-hour alert for tsunami tidal waves, officials said.

"At I realized for the moment first, lots of things just kept falling. I never outside with no shoes or, and then realized my was hurt. It was a very powerful quake," a woman in her 70s told public broadcaster NHK.

Hokkaido was shaken, after the initial quake, by six aftershocks measuring above 4.0 on the Richter scale, the Meteorological Agency official said.

A police spokesperson in Sekkai, he said at least 13 people were injured, including an 89-year-old woman who broke her arm after falling in her house and a 13-year-old boy whose leg was hurt by broken glass.

Apart from the old lady everyone had minor injuries and it was a relief that we had very few casualties," said spokesperson Akihiro Ishikawa.

The quake's focus was 48 kilometers underneath the Pacific Ocean off the coast of the town of Kushiro in Hokkaido, 900 km north of Tokyo, the Meteorological Agency said.

The latest tremor followed a quake registering 6.8 on the Richter scale in the central region of Niigata on Oct. 23, which killed a total 2 people and was followed by hundreds of aftershocks that have kept residents inside. AFP

South Korean scientists report nano-technology breakthrough

SEOUL—South Korean scientists reported an important breakthrough in nano-technology research Monday, saying they had found a safe and inexpensive way to mass-produce nano-particles used in next-generation applications from storage devices to drug delivery systems.

Seoul National University professor Hyeon Taeg Hyeon said that he and his colleagues have invented a cheap, safe and easy way to acquire a large amount of monodisperse nano-crystals using iron-oxide salts in their experiments.

Until now scientists have failed to find a method to produce large quantities of nano-particles, or nano-crystals, without using expensive toxic chemicals.

The development of uniform nano-particles has received scientific interest around the world because of their applications in next-generation storage devices, solar batteries, medical imaging equipment and drug delivery systems.

So far only very small quantities have been produced. One nanometer is equal to one billionth of a metre.

"These are only revolutionary findings," Hyeon said, adding that the new technology would also enable very cheap production—just 25 cents per gram.

Hyeon's team used diethyl salts as a reactant to regularly produce as much as 40 grams in a single machine.

"Our technology enables the large-scale production of nano-particles," Hyeon said. AFP

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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PHARMACEUTICS

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in the Entertainment section

Angelina Jolie wants to have kids from all over the world

By Rebot V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—Angelina Jolie will become a dual citizen of Cambodia and the US.

Angelina made the announcement at a press conference for Oliver Stone's epic, "Alexander." While the actress was answering a question if she could be like the committing mother she portrays in "Alexander," she revealed that she will soon become a citizen of Cambodia—possibly this Christmas—as well, for the sake of her adopted son, a Cambodian orphan named Maddox, 3.

Angelina also said she plans to adopt other children from other parts of the world.

The Oscar-winning actress said, "Yes, I would do just about anything if I felt that my son's life was in danger."

Not a political decision

Then she declared, "I do feel that my son has a responsibility to Cambodia. I am going to take Cambodian citizenship. I will be a dual citizen of Cambodia and the US. I'm very focused on that country and its progress and Maddox's future.

"If Maddox tells me at 15 that he doesn't care [about Cambodia], we're going to have a huge fight because he has a huge responsibility. I take that very seriously and that's part of his destiny. I will insist upon it."

Asked if taking a second citizenship was a political decision on her part, Angelina, who has been the goodwill ambassador of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR] since 2001, replied, "It's not political. I have a Cambodian family anyway. I have a home and work there."

However, she conceded, "But it [being a Cambodian citizen] will practically allow me to do a lot more in Asia for maybe political reasons. I could get involved in different things but it's just that I was offered it [Cambodian citizenship] and out of respect for that country and to my son, I am going to take it."

This was a very sensible-sounding acquisition, a far cry from her image when she surprised people by marrying actor Billy Bob Thornton. She and Billy Bob were vials containing each other's blood, had multi-tattoos and a volatile relationship. They were divorced in 2003.

There is a rumor that she and Billy Bob are back on speaking terms. There are also horrifying reports that Angelina's rift with her dad, actor Jon Voight, is over.

Mad about Mudd

Three days, Maddox, nicknamed Mudd, whom she and Billy Bob adopted when the boy was seven months old in 2002, is the one resembling her life, she answered. "I think

JOLIE-MOM with son Maddox

Maddox would probably tell you he has full control of me," she said with a laugh.

"But I'm a strong mom and it's probably because I don't have someone helping me raise him, I insist on him being really good mannered. He has a time like—

"I'll let him choose what he wants to be but there are certain things I will insist upon, like his responsibility as a person to have a balance in his life and to do good things.

"We have a project in Cambodia named after him involving forest rangers, monks, protecting animals in the forest and eliminating the land mines. That will be part of committing that he's got to take seriously. Everything else he can have fun with. He can be a painter or he can do whatever he wants but I will insist on certain things, yes."

Beautiful thing

While Angelina denied that she plans to adopt another child in the immediate future, she confirmed a "long-range plan to adopt more kids from different countries. "I've been watching Mudd. I'm wondering when is it going to be a perfect time for him [to have a sibling]. I do think it's difficult with different countries. I've realized that my dreams, of having children from all around the world, from different cultures and religions, is so complicated as it is a beautiful thing to do.

"To have a 'shalim' child in a home with a Christian child at this time is something I'd like to do. I'd like my Buddhist son [Maddox] living

CONTINUED ON A13

MADDOCK somersaults Jolie's life these days, she admits.

DEVOTED MOTHER in real life, Jolie plays scorching mother to Colin Farrell (below) in "Alexander."

"I DIDN'T think I could have played her without being a mom myself," she says of her role as Alexander's mother

Angelina Jolie wants . . .

(From page A 12)

with everybody. I'd like everybody together and all cultures mixing, but the countries that these children would come from would not let that be a possibility and take because of what the world thinks about such a union.

"And, yet that's what's needed to happen in my home and in the world. That's what we need to be able to accept, but yet, it's not easy. There are a lot of countries that wouldn't let me adopt because I'm a single woman. And because I am not of the same religion as the child, it has become a tough thing.

She continued the impression that her yesterday three days as UNHCR's goodwill ambassador in Asia.

"Oh, no," she declared. "I was just in Zambia six days ago. I have some children that I'm connected to who are African. I have a very strong connection to Africa and to all countries. But to be here five months, I'm really going to try to focus on everything that's happening in Darfur and Sudan. I'm going to try to push those two forward in the minds of people."

Raising Alexander

Asked about the emotional ride she went through portraying a mother in different scenes, including Colin Farrell [the two were rumored to have dated while filming this lavish production], playing Alexander the Great as different ages, Angelina replied, "Raising a son and feeling like you're raising him on your own is something I know very well. But 4th century BC was obviously a very different time. This was a time when, if Alexander didn't take the throne and if he didn't have a certain strength, we would both be killed.

"My approach was, the scariest trauma and dark but she was just doing anything to protect her son. I don't think I could have played her without being a mom myself. I wouldn't have been able to do it successfully.

"When I wouldn't do it the last scene where I had to scream because of a tragedy, I tried to think about my son and something happening to him. I see the [re-enactment] scenes I cried and screamed to be hard. I don't know if I can if it's a bad scene. I refused to go [here and] it was very hard. So certain moments in the movie were just too personal."

It also got too emotional for Angelina at this point in the press con. Replying to a question on how President George W. Bush's re-election may bring an easier humanitarian work for the UNHCR, she confessed, "I shouldn't even say this strongly but I feel that I have to. In the last few years of traveling [as UNHCR's goodwill ambassador], I was able to say to people, who felt that the US was sending us its men and doing things that maybe were not the right things, 'Trust me. There's not the American people's wish. They're great people.'

"I can't say that now because the majority said they support [Bush's] actions and it's heartbreaking. . ." Brow furrowed, bit her lips hard, leaned and turned her head to the right and, almost close to tears, continued saying, "that I can't defend the people I love in this country."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2004

ENTERTAINMENT

'Bravo,' Tita Bibot!

SHE wanted no tears, so friends are sending her off with laughter, stars and applause

By Nestor U. Cruz

"BRAVO! Bravo!" Dozens elaborate Zenaida "Bibot" Amadro's friends cheered and applauded, as though she were onstage for her last performance.

In fact, her lifeless body was being carried out of her house in Magallanes Village, Makati and into an ambulance on Sunday afternoon, according to actress-filmmaker Bibot.

Amadro succumbed to lung cancer at 2 p.m. on Sunday. She was 71.

No tears

"Tita Bibot said beforehand that she didn't want people to be sad [when she died]," Monique told Inquirer Entertainment in a phone interview on Monday. "Every[one] was playing the piano while the rest of us were singing, laughing and clapping our hands."

Which was just appropriate, said the award-winning actress. "There's so much to celebrate about her life."

Amadro will be laid to rest tomorrow at the Garden of the Risen Christ in Muntinlupa City after a 9 a.m. Mass at Kapilyahan ng Alpasyon de Lignon Parish.

Monique said she and a group of friends had decorated Amadro's house with Christmas ornaments on Wednesday, Nov. 24, the night before the director-actress was discharged from the hospital.

All-star cast

"Tita Bibot (Romulo, stage actress) and Amadro's longtime companion] said that's what Tita Bibot wanted, so she rushed to their house and put up the Christmas tree," Monique recounted. "By Saturday, we already knew that she was not to well. Some of us were there as early as 9 a.m. We thought she might pass away then. In the afternoon, more [than] a hundred people were present: Sylvia Sanchez, Noel Trinidad, Lourdes Gaddao, Lea Salonga—everybody was there. Tita Bibot was already having a hard time breathing."

When Amadro died the next day Romulo and their son adopted Giddeon came to her bedside, said Monique.

She added, "She (mother) asked me to take care of Tita Bibot and the children. Tita Bibot actually more than a teacher and director to me. She was like a parent. I was only nine years old when she became part of my life. Now, [to be] this entrusted to me the love for theater ... and the passion for excellence."

It's a boy and a girl for Roberts

LOS ANGELES—Oscar-winning actress Julia Roberts has given birth to twins, a boy and a girl, in a hospital here, People magazine reported Saturday.

Roberts, 37, gave birth around 3 a.m. Sunday, and she and the babies were doing well, the magazine reported on its website.

The babies' names are Hazel Moder and Finn Moder, the report added, citing unnamed sources. The father is cameraman Danny Moder.

ROBERTS

Roberts was admitted to hospital a month ago with early contractions.

The actress won the best actress Oscar for her role as a crusading PI lawyer in the 2000 film "Erin Brockovich." She married Moder at a surprise ceremony at their hideaway home in the remote US state of New Mexico in July 2002.

Roberts was previously married to singer Lyle Lovett, with whom she walked down the aisle in 1993. That union lasted only 21 months.

She shot to worldwide fame after playing a lovable prostitute in 1990's "Pretty Woman," a role for which she was nominated for a best actress Academy Award. She won a best supporting actress nod for her role in 1989's "Steel Magnolias."

AFP

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OPINION

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What is PMA teaching?

EDITORIAL

RECENT irregularities and scandals involving graduates of the Philippine Military Academy bring up the question of the adequacy and relevance of the education our future military officers are getting at the PMA. Are they being educated and trained for service to country and fellowmen or for self aggrandizement and service to self? And then again, the education they are getting may be good, but the examples some of their elders are setting may be far from ideal.

Instead of setting an example of honor, service and duty, many of their elders are showing that deceit, dishonesty and corruption pay great dividends. Instead of promising the ideal of service, many officers are lusting after power and golf.

The example of recently retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, who is accused of amassing unexplained wealth totaling P1.48 million, is the most of several cases involving PMA graduates. Garcia is not the only one who is alleged to have made millions at the expense of the taxpayers and to the detriment of the enlisted men who subsist on starvation rations, wear tattered uniforms and receive substandard boots, rainy suits, ski rifles and some substandard bullets and "bullet-proof" vests. Garcia just had the misfortune of getting caught, largely because of the simple-minded ease of his wife. Other generals and colonels must have amassed fortunes of their own in the past and are still amassing them today. The generals' and colonels' raid on the public treasury began during the martial law days when high-ranking officers were coddled by the decisions Ferdinand Marcos because he needed them to prop up his martial law regime.

The examples set by the generals seem to have prompted lower-ranking officers to earn their own "markets." Corruption has become a way of life in the upper echelons of the military. Because of the example at the top, it is not surprising that no less than the subdirectorate of PMA, Class 20/84, 2nd Lt. Barly Joaquin, was caught switching the tag on a compact disc so that he could get a 50-cent discount at the commissary in Fort Benning in Georgia.

Joaquin had seen his elders get away with grand theft in the military and he probably thought that he could get away with a comparatively much lesser offense. But he did not reckon with the fact that the situation is not the same in the United States, where strict adherence to the law is the norm, and especially in a disciplined military.

What a pity! What waste! Here was a brilliant PMA graduate who had a promising career ahead of him, educated at the expense of P2.1 million in taxpayers' money, receiving everything, all for a gallon can. He could have been chief of staff of the AFP later in his career, but he chose to follow the bad example of some of his elders. An example of the chiefs not matching the words taught at the academy.

The case of Maj. Ferdinand Barnas is different. No one is disputing that what one's sexual preferences are and what one does in the privacy of the bedroom is not the government's or the military's concern. But it becomes a public concern when it affects an officer's work in the military.

Homosexuality is not a crime, but it is an offense for a superior officer to force a subordinate soldier to do certain sexual acts, whether they be "normal" or "abnormal." The officer has moral ascendancy over the subordinate; he should exercise such ascendancy for good and not for evil purposes.

How has the PMA has fallen in its standards and to what depths has it plunged in the public esteem? It used to be known as the ideal matter of strong men, courageous men, men of integrity, skills, virtuous men, but now it has become a breeding ground of many corrupt, unmistakable, power-hungry officers.

The PMA curriculum may have to be reexamined and restructured to remedy flaws that may be discovered and to make it more relevant to the needs of the times. It has to instill a sense of honor, duty and service to its graduates, whose education is paid for by the taxpayers. The military is supposed to serve and protect the people, not to steal from them.

The PMA graduates now occupying high-ranking places in the military have to be constantly reminded of its motto: Courage, Integrity and Loyalty. Courage, including moral courage. Integrity, meaning the highest sense of honor and honesty. And loyalty not only to the PMA, but more importantly, to the country and its people. More than a reexamining of the PMA curriculum, a thorough reform of the officer corps, which is composed mostly of PMA graduates, may be called for, so that they will set a good example for the young ones. Our teachers better not just by precept, but by example.

Serial jackpots

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

(The Sun Chief). It compares with the Irish sweepstakes. Jaz Carlos Smith of Associated Accountants in Antwerp tells people (her Belgian nationality?) "You are therefore (sic) born appearer (sic) for the lump sum pay out of more 1.25 million," he announces.

In chat rms, it therefore a lifestyle check, I will use neighbor embondumian. "Are you sure?" he pings.

Maybe. Maybe those serial jackpot images dancing through my head. Why. I'd give Dojo's multimillion dollar Asian Foundation and Fes dented attorney and psychologist in Lichtenstein a run for their money.

"No one would have remembered the Good Samaritan if all he had were good intentions," former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once said. "He had money as well."

By December (and in Manila), a frenzy in Madrid and Antioch's Pangan Promo will of coins roaring for my go-signal. I'm ready. What's the catch? "I had said his money are soon parted."

All the sewers are plotted identically down to the grammatical errors. Only the amounts vary. Keep it confidential, they ask. But witness a financial agent whose name is given. To dip into the till, first give the chap your private numbers.

Mr. Abel's cropped to provide your full names (sic), address, private phone, bond account and fax numbers," writes Dr. Omar Ali, who claims to be the Credit Bank of Iraq's auditor. Then, he'll transfer $14.5 million, which "no one will ever claim." When "repatriation to your bank account," we'll share: "60% for me, 35% for you and 5% for any expenses incurred (sic)."

There better than Mauritius "Member of Parliament" Rajesh Anand Bhagwan's offer which is only 25 percent. Dennis Chapelle at the Security and Investment Bank in Lagos claims access to the $20.5 million. Give your bank account numbers, and he'll transfer the loot straight to us.

Indeed, many should fulminate for a refinery: he's dying of esophageal cancer. Before listing God's judgment for a drunken life, would you help him distribute $28 million in the mouth? "I want God to be merciful to me and accept my soul," he says. Does holding the Almighty hostage for those bucks in the hereafter? "If you help dispatched (sic) it to that by regrettable, I have set aside 10% for your time," bid by the way, send your bank account numbers anyone.

Pooh. It needs 1 billion zeroes. Their appeals are hitched to officials composed of heralding ill-gotten wealth. Letters claim access to the wealth of Mobuto Sesoko, Papa Doc Duvalier, Suharto—even Saddam Hussein.

"I lived in a row that grows on and on," an Iranian lawyer's epic.

How many have been ensnared? But if e-mail traffic is any indication, there are suckers out there willing to be fleeced. What said there was one "born every minute"?

Not up, even with Bush in his own hair of "half a million dollar inducements." Someone his head. Istanbul exchanges revolted in an elaborate meeting miserable at a Bangkok hotel. On 15 May, my son didn't show up. In reply to long distance inquiries, he replied: "I'm the way at the airport. I had a flat tire."

Ever softer, this line explained to me. Charles de Gaulle summed it well: "Revenge is a dish best eaten cold."

Footnote to UP

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

Every time the tone for UP president comes up, I keep hearing the idea that it's just a choice between a good administrator and a good administrator, a good administrator being more preferable. Into an all. Good administrators are what a thriving, good academic institution needs. Without a thriving, good academic institution being those who devote their lives to the pursuit of knowledge rather than money. I was about to say to the pursuit of knowledge rather than power, but I just remembered that knowledge is power, as Francis Bacon said, a thing reiterated to the walls of some schools. But that is a concept that has been lost on the ex-students of some who have joined GMA, to the same way that the concept of "serve the people" has been lost on the ex-students who have joined the CPP-NPA.

I told Evangelina, when she asked me to come (and those of other media people) on what kind of vision the UP president ought to have, that I thought she or he should forsake UP's role as a powerful voice in national affairs. That is just something a president can do, that is something a scholar, or sage, can do. You may not like Teodoro Benigno, or agree with what he does (some of my friends have settled scores on my about him), but he brings to the presidency of the president. Something that hasn't happened in a long time, the mentality—(and integrity)—challenged opponents having gotten a lock on the 10th presidency in much to be considered.

I said I recommended the time when UP debated ideas with the passion, or tumultuousness, with which people did answers of faith during the time of the Inquisition. I remember the time when people were ironclad and papist and did not just defend them to

MY friend congressman-to-be Imelda Romualdez. She is the ceremonial president of the University of the Philippines (which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2008) after winning a closely contested fight last week. She will preside against a filmmaking opponent: candidate Edgardo Esperas. Child apparently won all our to get hapless elected, though happily she did not have Benjamin Madrigal to contend the votes of the board of Regents, which is all the reason for human's victory has become a victory for decency of good manners and right conduct.

She is also, not quite incidentally, the first woman president of UP. Well, there's no harm in recognizing the dawning of the new age, or in some the new AP entering when that a woman holds the key to the country's mind.

I am not sure UP Technical once asked me, "Where did you graduate from UP?" and I answered, "Actually, no hard—reasons." I studied at the history but dropped out on my last semester, something I do not particularly encourage today's college students to do—differ my mind. Different things. But I've always felt that my education at the University of the Philippines was not complete without that very last few years. The best convictions seldom win, especially in this country. I thought my antecedents of formal might help Dayrit, and deserved prominence the home post of valor.

The second was that I was rooting for Georgina Reyes, the former MassCom head. Of course, with her one of the running the other week, I'd have gladly thrown my support to the trait, but for Reason No. 1.

Over time the vote for UP president comes up, I keep hearing the idea that it's just a choice between a good administrator and a good administrator, a good administrator being more preferable. Into an all. Good administrators are what a thriving, good academic institution needs. Without a thriving, good academic institution being those who devote their lives to the pursuit of knowledge rather than money. I was about to say to the pursuit of knowledge rather than power, but I just remembered that knowledge is power, as Francis Bacon said, a thing reiterated to the walls of some schools. But that is a concept that has been lost on the ex-students of some who have joined GMA, to the same way that the concept of "serve the people" has been lost on the ex-students who have joined the CPP-NPA.

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over claim." When "republicanism's core bank account," we'll share: "60% for me, 35% for you and 5% for any expenses incurred (sic)."

There better than Mauritius "Member of Parliament" Rajesh Anand Bhagwan's offer which is only 25 percent. Dennis Chapelle at the Security and Investment Bank in Lagos claims access to the $20.5 million. Give your bank account numbers, and he'll transfer the loot straight to us.

Indeed, many should fulminate for a refinery: he's dying of esophageal cancer. Before listing God's judgment for a drunken life, would you help him distribute $28 million in the mouth? "I want God to be merciful to me and accept my soul," he says. Does holding the Almighty hostage for those bucks in the hereafter? "If you help dispatched (sic) it to that by regrettable, I have set aside 10% for your time," bid by the way, send your bank account numbers anyone.

Pooh. It needs 1 billion zeroes. Their appeals are hitched to officials composed of heralding ill-gotten wealth. Letters claim access to the wealth of Mobuto Sesoko, Papa Doc Duvalier, Suharto—even Saddam Hussein.

"I lived in a row that grows on and on," an Iranian lawyer's epic.

How many have been ensnared? But if e-mail traffic is any indication, there are suckers out there willing to be fleeced. What said there was one "born every minute"?

Not up, even with Bush in his own hair of "half a million dollar inducements." Someone his head. Istanbul exchanges revolted in an elaborate meeting miserable at a Bangkok hotel. On 15 May, my son didn't show up. In reply to long distance inquiries, he replied: "I'm the way at the airport. I had a flat tire."

Ever softer, this line explained to me. Charles de Gaulle summed it well: "Revenge is a dish best eaten cold."

Micro-managing

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassayan

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

Immediate action urged on PNR bridge

THE RECENT accident in Padre Burgos, Quezon, which resulted in the death of seven passengers and injury to scores of others, brings to fore the threat of another accident that could prove to be much more serious. I refer to the bridge of the Philippine National Railways in Pandacan, which spans across the Pasig River.

Time and again, the bridge has been besieged by ingloid and garbage during downstream during heavy rains or high tides. When a portion of the bridge is trampled on by of engineers, train operators have to be stopped while the sandalpan must is picked loads to position.

To be, nothing untoward has happened. But what if the bridge were so dangerously damaged and nobody gave a report about it, thus handing a train to crash it? That train, with its passengers, could plunge into the murky depths of the river and the loss of human lives could run into the hundreds.

So far the PNR has thrown great interest the safety of the bridge even with the employment of that they will cause the bridge to a high-

er level. The project now will be about 100 million. This amount is reportedly to be taken from the budget of the SouthRail project which will be funded by the Government.

They say that work can start on the project as soon as Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo gives the green light. Let's hope that

some responsible

—RAMON J. SERVIDAD
Bulloch Mansion,
11-A Tennessee St.,
BF Homes, Quezon City

Globe-trotters vs globe-trotters

MEAD are the biggest individual spenders of the people's money? Who else has the manners of Congress?

Happy days are with them again after the "heroic" effort of the appropriations committee in rounding in full their desires of the needs. Friday's plenary session of Congress can now facilitate the approval of the 2005 appropriations as formulated.

Good timing for their yuletide revels. Father Time figuratively dons the Nanta suit of Senate President Franklin Drilon can hang the gar-

ed, you'll find them living up to the anyone on their way out of the country purportedly on official business, just to attend the interparliamentary Union) or for a much needed vacation with their families. And how they're itching to investigate, "in aid of legislation" the alleged globe-trotting habits of generals and their wives.

Since the discovery of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia's wealth, they have stalled public attention away from their illicit spending of the people's money to the military's padding of government coffers, it's about time that people wake up and see are people-customers to inquire in on how much money is being spent and liquidated by the members of Congress. The military should wake up, see, and then sniff.

For this, the Commission on Audit, Ombudsman, Disbursement and the Presidential Commission against Graft and Corruption should cooperate with each other and make sure there is every penney every cent to be spent.

—MAE ANN PORTUGUESE
(BUTUYAN)
formae.mailer@yahoo.com

GMA's calamitous declaration

THE GOVERNMENT has yet more to "feed for School Program" under which some 10,000 school-children from impoverished families in three Manila and three neighboring provinces are expected to bring home within a 5-month period two grams of rice from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The program is the government's response to a flawed Health-to-Business survey which revealed that a significant number of our people are suffering from constant hunger. The fact is food nationwide are distributed every time there is a calamity. The fact is the entire nation is under a state of calamity because of the government's unceasing submission to the repressive, IMF/World Bank imposed economic policies.

It is a state of calamity that the government does not have the decency to accept the problems that have been plaguing our nation.

The rice rations in schools can never be a solution to our economy's worsening poverty and hunger. And how about the hungry in our families who cannot afford lunch and nights with milk, if there is any, food in their stomachs?

It is sad that in the face of this situation, President Macapagal-Arroyo can still smile and proudly declare, "The crisis is over."

—ELLA MARIANO,
public information officer,
Kilusang Mayo Uno-Bagong Alyansang Makabayan
sa Kalinaw,
139 E.D.S., Kamias, QC

GSIS acts on retiree's claim

THIS refers to the letter of retired D. Baldado, executive judge of RTC 7th Judicial Region, Branch 58, Cebu City, which was published in the Oct. 26, 2004 issue of the newspaper.

A review of Baldado's retirement service limestone shows records showing that he was granted a salary loan in the amount of P564,757.81 on June 30, 1994. However, no payment was made on the loan until the policy matured on Aug. 30, 2002 in the amount of P16,868.72, was therefore charged against the mature value of his policy.

Baldado subsequently obtained a salary loan in the tax amount of P363,020.76 on Nov. 13, 2000. His first monthly installment of P4,041.56, which should have been made on Jan. 1, 2001, came five months later (June 1, 2001), four earning surcharges. Moreover, only 26 monthly payments instead of 48 were made on this loan, so an amount of P97,130.88 was deducted from the maturity of his policy (June 6, 2002).

In the foregoing, data (RSA) on record with the GSIS disclose that the Supreme Court recommended to the GSIS in line with the system's program to reconcile its records with those of other government agencies, checks were an exclusion from requirement were made on his behalf, excluding Baldado and his family in view GSIS on the face value of his matured policy.

Nevertheless, upon re-computation, taking the above data into account, we are pleased to inform Baldado that he is entitled to a policy adjustment in the amount of P56,289.09, for which a check has already been prepared.

—ATTY. ELIZABETH C. PALENCIA,
vice president for public affairs,
Government Service
Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

Women in 'sanggunians'

EQUALITY under the flood crisis and persistent poverty facing the country have been supported. Yes, the 1987 Constitution has long identified a mechanism, known as local sectoral representation, to help address poverty and other developmental problems at the local level. Following this, the 1991 local government code specified that marginalized sectors—among them, women, workers, indigenous peoples, elderly, and urban poor—entitled to representation in local legislatives bodies (sangguniang). It is obvious though that this mechanism has still to be implemented.

Women—half of the population and bearers of the new generation—hardly constitute a sixth of the total number of local legislators. Equal women representation in sangguniang can help ensure that government policies, programs and services, such as credit, livelihood, healthcare, and protection drains are made accessible, participatory, sensitive and responsive to specific conditions. Such women representation is also mandated by the United Nations Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which our government signed twenty five (25) years ago.

As the government's national machinery for women's advancement, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) supports the representation of women and other marginalized sectors in the sangguniang. The pursuit of development must be a shared effort of government and civil society organizations.

The framers of our Constitution realized that the poorest is heavily in the most reason there is for the marginalized sectors to be represented so that they can help solve the problems that especially hamper—the marginalized women especially because in a state of crisis, they bear the additional services suffering from poor health and nutrition, abusive partners, labor displacement, vulnerable to gender-based violence and are excluded with inadequate voice in their private and public lives, and those women leaders and leaders are rumored his poverty.

Let us use the issues of women as equal partners in local legislation be heard, let policy making at the local level be made more accountable to women and responsive to gender equality and equity. Let us support the passage of an enabling law in the 13th Congress for the representation of the marginalized and underrepresented women in the sangguniang.

—CHERYLINE L. TORRIJOS,
executive director,
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW),
1145-1150 Quezon Ave.,
San Miguel, 1005, Manila

ERC must correct Meralco's charges after Napocor rate increase

THIS is a reaction to the increase in the Meralco electricity rate, otherwise known as "universal charge" (PTR, 11/09/04) which reported that, starting December 2004, the National Power Corp. will be charging a provisional increase (AFP, 22/10/04) for the Lo-ansingkil.

According to the report, the Napocor increase will result only in an additional increase of P1.875/kWh for Meralco customers. Napocor's increase is equivalent to 20 percent of its power requirements from Napocor."

We believe that Meralco's P1.875/kWh increase is 39.58 centavos higher than what Meralco is actually supposed to pay. Consistent following Napocor's P1.2338/kWh increase. The Napocor rate increase should mean an additional increase of only P1.48 centavos per kWh for Meralco customers. This is arrived at by adding the provisional Napocor increase of P1.2338/kWh (approved by the Energy Regulatory Board) to the 2.79 centavos/kWh deferred recovering adjustment and 10.80 centavos/kWh (Napocor DSM) for a total of P1.3481/kWh. Multiply this figure with 85 percent (Meralco's off-take from Napocor) and the impact to Meralco customers should only be P1.0345/kWh.

This means that, if our estimates are correct, we will be overcharging its customers by 84.06 centavos. Multiply do not know that a 1-centavo overcharge translates to P220 million in additional income for Meralco. Our overcharge translates with Meralco's 2005 sales (22.21 billion kilowatt-hour). Imagine what a 84-centavo overcharge will mean for Meralco.

The ERC, as an independent regulatory body, must correct Meralco's figures, and as a form of public service to the millions of electricity consumers nationwide, the ERC must also come up with an explanation for the 39.58 centavos discrepancy between the 85 private distribution utilities and 120 electric cooperatives.

—DR. D. D. DUMAY,
Education and Research,
National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reform,
1010-14 Roxas Boulevard Southern Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

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Congressmen promised to cut their pork barrel by 40 percent to help calm the fiscal crisis. What is your reaction to their latest decision to retain 100 percent of their pork?

Sabayan! What else is new? Ever since nasimitan what-ni-nan said, "I Sad", LOLAY politician is a fool.
—**Ricardo Jaime Rolando,** Binondo City

pare GEEEE. sinuspong. Binaga nila ng tamang para sa mga kababayan natin para ng mga sinabi nila. pero sa ngayon sino nila, pansin ding kapalakan.
—**grace dorama,** Iloilo City

what else is new, "to be left as ways in a row".
—**Max Bachacha,** Bulacan

they are concerned with GRIDLS. disconcerned. They are so irresponsible in spearing the country. pity. PEOPLE LANG BOKOY!
—**paul geraldan,** Ancestor

I am greatly disappointed at them. Bayad 2 ilyonnalo. Day just did their services. Day shud b ashamed of themselves.
—**Andrea Ivan,** San Jose, Laguna

ok but they shud put safety nets on them if will be speed. PUBLIC dapanin TRANSPARENCY.
—**JEFF D. ORANAS,** QC

Wala tlaing palalim ok honor. bayad ah na nila ginagkakalimutan ng mga Pinoy.
—**jeffrey sese,** Iloilo

BANGIS, MAHA sa MGA G.D. Pilipino kaya nila.
—**DANILO VILLEGAS,** Diamond, Sta. Cruzna

did only receive 1 thing.... day r not serious in helping d govt. 2 secure d kumbaga sa, kunga kanyang kunakuan na ang:
—**cynthia g. enriquez,** Marikina

the pork barrel cud 1500 1000 2 50 THEN 100 % retention of pork equals 100% retention of LOAN? Ang saya-saya!
—**jovanna escalenda,** cebu city

1. Offered revenue measure for it days & implored d Lord 1 gvt & bring back 2 the republic.
—**Raul G. Sarmiento,** City of San Fernando

day have 2 keep what day promised. pay off d example of leaders. wat is d use, day hav 2 consider d country 1st then self
—**ralph dumaya,** Quezon City

sabi ni PGMA wala nacorrect, kaya sabi ng kongreso, tuloy ang kalokohan—ala bahalinayan. Kailangan pa bang i-memorize yan?
—**Rustico de Negra,** Pasig, Lagro

Even if pork barrel is just cut 2 corruption. It is still corrupted one of d worst economies. Tourist hands must be pressed by a low policy.
—...but still can d pinakaa impact on d economy. Pork barrel spreads scarce funds over a long
—**AJ Fix,** QC

nakakatuwa sila. sinu2 day call themselves "honorable"?
—**Gary Sol,** Iloilo

No matter wla figure na di pa nila nakakaisip ang dahilang pagka-of-borrowing dahilan para kaya bagan, & "back to normal."
—**Ignie b. Samonte,** calamba, pangasinan

it indicates that no one among them possesses political will and we are facing a bleak future.
—**Jonathan martinez,** cavite

para na lang pangsabi, kayo na bahala magdesisyon. Sana na kasi ilgan! Guam siya lang, hagonoy bulsa.
—**Josefina delmendo,** Dasmarinas city

with 3.6b at d the helm of congress, sigal d promised of pork cut. no barrier to adopt it just then the kicked out from d leadership.
—**mike rapolla,** Ateneo City

easy answer, 2 pork then packets.
—**harriet harvey Lo,** Davao City

A president said that a crisis is over, so a congressman can have a full pork barrel back....
—**Luisa vincent cerezo,** Japanese City

Congressmen have a reason to throughout borderless countries to support national issues.
—**alanis arampac,** Caloocan city

Retain it cut off 100% pork barrel is good news coz it's a major source of development projects in Mindanao especially remote barangays.
—**Edgardo C. Tuelli,** Digos City

promises are made 2 b broken. day made national other promises in 4 directions. Non-sense! makes anyone!
—**jun-jun ao, metro**

This concerned lawmaker should resign the proposal.
—**Liza Lumawag,** Sta. Rosario

day are just made. If only reason day need 2 retain it, is 2 make it look big & explode. If day want it, den day should resign. We don't need den.
—**Hjal Medlana,** Digos City

Their promises 2 cut are pork is baloney. They must push + retention as their source of kickbacks.
—**Ina Rivera,** Bacoor, Cavite City

money changes everything.
—**Marian B. Bato,** Digos City

Nagsabi ka lang ulang kaniang SALE LANG.
—**Bernie Tangcuan,** Cebu, QC

during 1pm of Labor Day, ina-h m. spokesman, and breakfast where she voiced thanks and forbearance & short of food. it'd give food to every child of portables water then in congressional area and set up a deep well water system so that even in the remotest provinces of d country as proj. no. will help d poor constituents to dry type of crisis.
—**ALEXIA MILA G. BARRIENTOS,** 4th d, pasay city

day taxpayers to pay? What
—**alfonso tolosa,** Buenos Aires

Mga Bi-SHITS sila.
—**Armando R. Samaniego,** Jasonga City

in times of crisis as still, day must keep their word 1 on 2 before then.
—**Tyler edward rosseng,** Bayawan city

if a member of congress is called a liars, thieves, scandalists, adulterers, murderers, rapist, thief etc., are heroes 2?
—**david cruz,** Bacoor, Cavite

The senate made sacrifices on Higher prices but this pork barrel of every Congressman are not sacrifices, but additional burden!
—**Expert Bacolbag,** Manila

not all congressmen should retain 100% pork barrel, only those who are situated in depressed areas. Cancel totally 100% pork barrel.
—**patricio p. aranda III,** quezon city

any use/not surprised?
—**gertrudes sapitan,** metro city

Honorable ang Elite nila pero walang "the shine of honor." Ang "GLORY" ang nagbibigay ng honor pinagkaiba
—**Liana Ramos,** Pasay City

promises are made to be broken.
—**henry soto,** alabang

ang bahay nangin na nang bahay ng kongreso, bahay pa rin
—**emma g. labbao,** quezon city

promise is one thing, and implementation is another thing. They only promised for "papogi", during the crisis.
—**Rod G. reyes,** caloocan city

same as all, boss congressmen and his partners in crime thrives many d lord and kingdom politicians.
—**Brenda C. Tolentino,** Mangaldan, Pangasinan

they only want 2 cover d luxury of funding d pork barrel. Dare 2 sacrifice a little of it, to assist the nation.
—**Isabel Mangat,** manila

they'll give us all percent pork if stop the scandals? Yeah, it my reason 2 celebrate pork. 2 month ang all. PEOPLE IT!
—**mark manalang,** laguna

An unpacified, affair d issue is very cool. It's back to their old ways. If issues stop change God d leading ways it starts.... Jesus we adore them.
—**Pepe Sanchez,** QC

then let us start to stops d bad boycotts and demand their recall.. They want us to pay more taxes for their gain.
—**eric manas,** antipo, noveleta cavite

no more sense of patriotism. If only those did their personal interest people more d interest of d nation.
—**jovic abad,** cambanaga city

it is a true dying economy & how. pity people. their incompetence leaving suffers & members that are loaded & opportunities their mind be poverty. Shameless! Zombie! this crisis, they should not partake of
—**Bienvenido Estico Jr.,** Mati

METRO

Lito Erice G. Diaongzon
Assistant Editor Conrado B. Bito

Rizal cops go hi-tech to catch suspects

By Luige A. del Puerto

IT MAY have taken time, but police have begun to use the tools offered by new technology to combat crime.

Following the example set by their counterparts in Mandaluyong City now using the e-blotter system, Rizal policemen are now ready to use its own electronic crime recording system called Crime-Analysis Reporting System or CARS, according to Supt. Leonardo Santiago Jr.

The newest, patterned after the electronic cataloging scheme in countries like England, the United States and Japan, would enable the police to check a person's record within minutes.

Particularly helpful in tracking down a suspect, the system can also provide crime statistics within minutes, including a "crime clock" which tells how often a particular crime occurs in the province.

Entering a key word—due to, the name of the suspect, victim or crime—in the computer gives the user the a list of cases under that word. At present, the CARS can store up to a million cases.

"Today, a criminal from a particular town, scamming his victims does not draw similar attention, can simply go to another town to get a police clearance, or to hide from law enforcers.

"Under CARS, if you have a record in Antipolo City for crime, you can no longer go to Juan Ada (town) and get a clearance there," Santiago said.

The Rizal police chief said he started developing CARS six years ago, during the administration of then President Joseph Estrada.

At that time, the Philippine National Police and the Department of Justice were supposed to acquire a similar technology.

"I developed CARS with a friend," Santiago added. "I'm willing to distribute the software to other PNP units for free. Maybe, the PNP can even get a patent for this."

Santiago said CARS offers vast potentials, the most helpful of which is the ability to instantly check a person's background.

"If the system is already in place, maybe we can hook up with the Land Transportation Office through the Internet," he added.

Of the 14 towns (including one city) in the province, 10 have already acquired the CARS. Town local police units have started recording the new entries from the blotter book, and give updates to the Rizal headquarters every week, using a diskette. Later on, past records could be dug up and encoded as well.

The data could also be stored in CDs, which could easily be retrieved when needed.

Efforts to use new technology had been recently outlined to individual city or provincial police stations. The PNP is yet to implement a nationwide data encoding system linked to regional police stations.

Not homey enough for rail folk

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

LEGAL government encroachment may be ready to welcome them, but Muntinlupa City residents to be displaced by the Southrail Project are not considering relocation to Tiaong City in Buklayan, Rizal.

The leaders of the two rival organizations of affected Muntinlupa City residents both refused to consider the site, saying it was too far from their workplaces.

Buklayan Metro Pedro Guerrero had said the 2,500 hectares out of an aborted mass housing project for the poor could be the site for the displaced Southrail folk were looking for. Tiaong City could still accommodate 30,000 more families, he added.

The first segment of the Southrail Project would connect Edsacost City in Malolos, Bulacan to a secondary town in the world's rearing capital, the area's serious problem.

The company, a joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom, vowed to restore the network back to normal by 6 p.m. yesterday.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, Globe vice president Jones Campos said the company had already restored service to 70 to 80 percent of the affected areas.

Campos could not say exactly how many subscribers of cellular were affected, but admitted that "a lot" of their customers were displeased with the incident.

He said the company would issue immediately one what caused the problem.

Campos said the company's engineers were conducting a routine check on cellular sites within the affected areas at 3 a.m. when a computer system malfunctioned.

"We would like to apologize to our subscribers for the inconvenience this minor incident had caused," Campos added.

"We cannot pinpoint exactly to keep the network fit, but unfortunately, we had to lose this incident problem," he said.

Globe president Fernando Aldana said the incident was isolated and that the company's engineers were continuously working on the problem.

"The problem is definitely isolated and the service would be restored shortly," Aldana told the reporters in a text message from India.

Campos said Globe had to call on engineers of Nokia—the Finland-based company that built Globe's network as well as its computer system—for help.

Around-ranked Globe has 11.7 million subscribers as of the end of September.

Filmer rival Smart Communications Inc. has about 17.3 million during the same period.

More than 200 million text messages are sent daily from the two big players in the telecommunications industry. Globe said each of its subscribers sends an average of eight messages a day.

The company said its cellular service restored would be down to 6,000. Globe would enable it to cover almost 90 percent of the country's population. Another 1,000 cell sites would be built next year.

"Grooves" on stage tonight

"GROOVES and Grooves," starring the Sleepwalkers, will be staged at 9 tonight at the Mediatech Café at the ground floor of the Unimode Central Mall on Mola Road.

The Sleepwalkers, composed of Jay Ibes, Teri, Venus and Tina, will render songs and dances.

Tickets are available at the entrance.

Woman jumps off Edsa billboard; safety nets up

By Tina G. Santos

BARBED WIRE now surrounds billboard posts in Kamuning, Quezon City, as a safety precaution after another woman attempted to end her life by scaling and jumping off a billboard in the area the other day.

Supt. Eduardo Bermejo, commander of the CPD-Kamuning station, who ordered the preventive measure, also urged security guards manning the compound in the corner of East Avenue and Edsa to be vigilant and prevent people from entering or passing through the premises to get to the giant billboards.

"This is the second time that somebody managed to scale that billboard. This should never happen again," Bermejo told reporters.

Pinky Ramos, 39, of Bagbag, Novaliches, Quezon City, was apprehended by police security guards and quickly subdued before she could jump off the billboard.

Investigators learned that Ramos began climbing the billboard at the corner of East Avenue and Edsa around 4:30 p.m. Sunday, setting off a commotion in the area.

Traffic enforcers, who had a motorcycle officer a few meters away from the billboard, told the investigators they were surprised when they saw the woman already on top of the billboard.

Concerned bystanders immediately called the Patrol 117 hotline and the CPD-Station 10 operations and the Special Rescue Unit from the police and local government to quickly respond to the scene.

While negotiations with lawyers to discourage her from committing suicide.

An hour later, Ramos slipped from the 60-foot high billboard, but managed to cling from scaffolding.

She repeatedly tried to climb again to the top.

However, after several attempts, some 30 minutes later, she gave up and eventually fell.

Another alert motorist immediately placed the air bag beneath and managed to catch her.

Luckily, the landing on a nearby sidewalk was cushioned by members of the Bureau of Fire Special Rescue Unit at the foot of the huge billboard.

Because of the impact, the safety fitted net fabric was "loosened off," eventually landing on the pavement.

A medical team also stayed with her while she was in the hospital as Ramos fell.

Ramos was later taken to the East Avenue Medical Center for medical treatment.

Same billboard

Relatives of the victim said Ramos's failure to find a job and her husband's alleged womanizing prompted her to climb the billboard and attempt to take her life.

For her this month, a woman also worked by the same billboard and threatened to jump off.

The woman, reportedly a former patient of the National Center for Mental Health, claimed she did so to air her complaint against a certain government official.

She said the company failed to grant her a raise in a promotional contest she had won recently. With a report from Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Loi, Jinggoy should first look in their backyard

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PAMPANGA Rep. Mikey Arroyo was quoted out of context on the issue of legalizing marijuana.

During the congressional budget hearing where some officials of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Administration (PDEA) were being questioned, Arroyo said he would support the bill legalizing marijuana if it could be proved that it had medicinal uses. He stressed that the medical review should be extended on the issue of whether marijuana has a medical use.

In some countries, marijuana is used under strict medical supervision.

But some people leapt at the chance to bash the son of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Some of those people know that Arroyo was quoted out of context by the media. All they have to do is go over the minutes of the congressional hearing, and they'll find that members did he say he was supporting marijuana's legalization countrywide.

Some of the people ganging up on Arroyo are the mother and out brats of Senators Loi Ejercito and Jinggoy Estrada. We all know they are obsessed by the "hate" motive.

Ms Ejercito said that as a doctor she knows the harmful effects of marijuana so "Congressman Arroyo cannot justify its legalization."

Jinggoy, for his part, challenged the Pampanga congressman to undergo a drug test to find if the latter uses drugs.

Before they started pummeling Arroyo in the media, the mother-and-son team should have looked in their backyard. They will find it full of filth.

Most people have a short memory. They have forgotten that Jude Estrada, Jinggoy's sibling and Loi's youngest child, was once involved in a scandalous drug deal.

When Erap was still vice president, Jude reportedly beat up an old woman named Espedida after the latter failed to remit drug money to the son of the vice president.

When Erap was still vice president, Jude reportedly beat up an old woman named Espedida after the latter failed to remit drug money to the son of the vice president.

It was a big scandal at that time. The story died down after Jude was sent to the United States where he enrolled to be a helicopter pilot. When Jude came back from the United States, Erap was already in power so Jude was made a captain in the Air force.

Even during Erap's time as president, Jude didn't earn even a new leaf. He was reported to be holding clubs with certain individuals.

Jinggoy should have held his horses on his proposal to have Arroyo undergo drug test to find out if he is a drug user.

When he was the Senate minority leader, Jinggoy was the first senator to undergo a drug test. But Jinggoy refused to have one.

When the chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Office told him that it was a requirement and that nobody was exempted from it, Jinggoy blew his top. He threatened to have the PDEA chief removed.

If Jinggoy didn't have anything to hide, he would have readily consented to a drug test. And it would have been a big issue in his favor.

The media would have come out with the news that despite his being the son of President Erap, he nonetheless a drug test for a threat to become. And everybody would have cheered "Hallelujah" for him.

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SPORTS

PBA's best vs the worst collide in P. Princesa

THE BEST-PERFORMING team so far in the Green Hutsador PBA Philippine Cup goes up today against the worst when the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals tackle the Sta. Lucia Realtors at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum.

The Phone Pals try to pull ahead by two games against their closest pursuers when they meet the cellar-dwelling Realtors in the 6 p.m. end of lanes as the sponsored by Lucozade, the official food supplement of the PBA third time.

Aiming for an 11th win in 12 games and a season best sixth straight victory, the Phone Pals (10-1) also want to get back at the Realtors who whipped them in the Fiesta Conference.

"Pero [Bodoyan] maaayos up with [Gregorio] Honeycutt [as] conference," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal. "We are eyeing to get back at them."

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ABC stint, instead of Asiad, for pro league

By Jutz Nicdao

IT'S a done deal.

This was how secretary general Graham Lim of the Basketball Association of the Philippines described yesterday the memorandum of agreement drafted by the Philippine Basketball Association on the formation of the national team for the next four years.

"I see no problem with the MOA. Everyone, the BAP board concurs [today] to share the expenses of the agreement and get back to the PBA as early as Wednesday," said Lim.

Prepared by PBA commissioner Noli Eala, the MOA draft has already been approved by the league's Board of Governors. It will be signed as soon as the BAP gives its nod.

Under the deal, the PBA takes full responsibility of entering the men's national in the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) championship in 2005 and 2007 in a bid to get back to the Olympics and the world championship.

Task for Cebuana Lhuillier

But the pro league will no longer be involved in the Asian Games campaign. The field's long-time backer, Cebuana Lhuillier, owned by businessman-sportsman Jose Louie Lhuillier, will be tasked to form the national squad for the 2006 Asiad Games in Doha, Qatar.

The PBA had thrown off its weapons in fielding an all-star RP five to the Asiad since 1990, when a team coached by Robert Jaworski finished second behind China. The Filipinos placed fourth in 2002 in Busan.

Next year's ABC, to be hosted by Qatar, serves as qualifying to the World Championship in Indiana, Japan, in 2006, while the 2007 edition of the Asian meet will make two tickets for the top finishers for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Last hurrah in Munich

The RP dribblers last saw action in the Olympics in 1972 in Munich. The country has failed to qualify in the World Championships since 1974.

Eala said the PBA-BAP partnership is a bold step toward reclaiming the country's lost pride on the global basketball scene.

The RP head coach will be appointed by the PBA and given full responsibility to select the players for the national team.

"It [MOA] is very simple but offers a broad partnership with the PBA. We, in the BAP, are excited about it," [illegible] the secretary.

The PBA will also make itself available for other tournaments outside of the ABC, except the Asian Games.

Lim also confirmed the appointment of chess and athletics chief Go Teng Kok as project director in the country's bid to host the 2007 ABC. Go is a close ally of BAP chief Carlo Katigbak.

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PBA's best . . .

from page B-3

The Bolts need a more well-rounded act as 1-3, all they want is to win their second straight game.

Alex coach Alfonso Chan admits the match will be "very tough," notwithstanding the big lineup reported to the Bankers' arsenals by their 94-92 victory over Coca-Cola last Wednesday.

"They have all to be ready," Chan said, referring to former 4-time all-star Willie Miller who rose to reinvigorated in the Phone Dial/Coca-Cola lineup. [illegible] was now Pamboole also for Welters.

city. "Their starting guards are currently the best in the league."

The Phone Pals will also look to the newly improved Mark Telan, the dependable Vic Vedo and the ever-improving Yeo's device troops.

The return of Emmanuel Hernandez from a leg injuries against Red additional him for three games has done wonders for Ronnie Lazo, giving Ginebra other options aside from his usual threats in Dennis Espino, Peter Mendoza, Nelbert Omolon and Marlou Aquino. Rene Navarro

Tindugan shocks Figueroa

FIGURING. Wendy Banks [illegible]

A LITTLE-KNOWN archer from Tondo, Abigail Tindugan, shocked Athens Olympian Jeanila Figueroa Sunday to produce the biggest surprise in the 1st Ramon A. Lim Elevenital Cup national target championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Tindugan, a 23-year-old University of Makati sophomore, outmuscled the 19-year-old Figueroa, 108-105, in the Olympic Round finals to emerge as the women's indoor champion in the competition organized by the Philippine Sports Commission and the family of the late archery president Ramon A. Lim.

It was Tindugan's first major triumph in an eight-year career. Her previous best finish was a team gold in the national target [illegible] meet in 2008.

"I can't believe it," said Tindugan of her victory over Figueroa, who made waves in Athens last August by beating former world champion Natalia Valeeva of Italy and eventually ending 27th overall. "I just give my best."

Archery Pan Jongpil, the women's compound bow division gold medal by routing former national Mimi Jennifer Chan, 112-97.

Athens tar Ian Reyes topped the recurve recurve bronze medal.

The duo's other gold medalists were James Ian Rolano (under-level), Jennilyn Banda (junior) and Jessa Lydia (standard round).

Rolano topped Francesco de Leonidhal, 110-110, while Banda won over Monica Bea Rivera on scoreback after they ended tied at 91 points.

Jose Khamil Isaac and Jose Maria Fernando Dimaculangan finished third in the under and junior division, respectively.

Dalin ran away with the standard round crown by reaching forty-four bivouac, 634-627.

Owners set to picket Philracom

A GROUP of horseowners are set to picket the Philippine Racing Commission after tomorrow to call attention to what it claimed was Philracom's "indecent haste" in issuing the Aquino Investigation Agency (IIA) training on horses.

The group will also demand the resignations of Philracom chair Anton Ching and commissioners Eddie Ilano, Eduardo Domingo Jr., Epi Fernando, Leopoldo Luz and Rogie Tachiera for defying a Department of Agriculture order downgrading IIA as a "mere shadow of a competence outside."

The department based its decision on a recommendation by the Philippine College of Equine Practitioners to the Abraham Tolosa Advisory Committee.

The group is continuing to boycott races at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite. It has accused the ELJP management of forcibly opening up the track and training them to other turfs.

"The racing industry is crumbling under the weight of the Philracom's mismanagement," the group alleged. "We will bring the issue to the streets, and then hopefully make President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo answer to losing millions."

"In refusing to heed a legitimate complaint from the owners themselves, the Philracom under Ching has shown poor discretion and abuse of authority," group leader and spokesperson William Dagoo said.

PSC tossers face Lyceum

[illegible] against younger more agile opposition in the Mallary's Pawnpro, the PSC Lady spikers still passed their last test in the eliminations at the Philsports arena to bring on battles.

GAME TODAY
(Philsports arena)
1 pm —PSC vs.
(center)
5 p.m.—BEN-HUR

With some visible out of shape, the PSC belles beat their opponent still held when they qua for a second straight win and sole leadership today against Lyceum in the main venue.

Coming off a relaxing 25-22, 25-15, 25-20 thumping of San Sebastian in the inaugurals, PSC dugs it out with the defending Lady Pirates in the 3 p.m. game after a duel over.

Tsukasa Isaisa, for two decades the premier attacker of the national team, showed flashes of her old brilliance against the Lady Stags.

"They are still the team to beat," said Lyceum coach Emil Lontoc of the PSC team, made up of the core that won for the Philippines in last Southeast Asian Games gold medal in 1995.

Isaisa, the MVP of that champion squad, was tapped by the PSC after organizers allowed the ok collegiate teams to reinforce their homebuilt tournaments each.

Some of the squads, like defending champion Santo Tomas, ...relied on injured La Salle to four new faculties—also joined former JU team members.

Six Xavier and Ateneo debut in the 5 p.m. contest. Manny R. Castillo

PROUD BUNCH
Members of the Ateneos Cabasan Doubler softballeuse ended their banner open-arrival at the PSAA recently. The Blazers, led by team co-star player Jean Mae Llanillo who posted a high .600 batting average, ruled the 11-team Bangkok International Softball League tournament last week. Also Estipular bagged the finals MVP trophy and Manuel Bocaya clinched the best defensive player plum.

Teams led by Antonio, Mariano favored in nat'l inter-city chess

SUBIC Governor Roger Tony and Olongapo Mayor Mark Peregrina hogging off due to previous commitments, the teams led by CSC Regulo Antonio Jr. and Mikaela Mariano II have been installed favorites to top the 2004 National Inter-Cities and Municipalities Chess Team Championship starting this Wednesday in Tagaytay City.

Subic, the 10-strong team [illegible] of SP dons, is here possessing the game of kings in the province while the 10-man old Baroque, the country's highest ranked player with its ELO rating of 2234, is campaigning in the 42nd World Junior Chess Championship in Cochin, India.

The weeklong competition, which draws P1,00,000 for the champion team, is organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and hosted by the city government of Tagaytay headed by Mayor Abraham Tolentino.

The team captains' meeting is set tomorrow at 11 a.m. at the Tagaytay Sports Center.

Antonio, who joins a record-best ELO rating of 2524, led the Tagaytay Center team to the title in last year's inter-province team championship in Puerto Princesa City. He will be at the vanguard of host Tagaytay.

Mariano Escalante Jr. Alabang-Muntinlupa City and he will be backed by ELO-lover Oswaldo Ong and Jr.

The team-by-team gets P60,000 and the third-placer P40,000. Marlon Bernardino

Wizards face Flight; Knights host Archers

MAGNOLIA-FEU has regained its winning form, but coach Koy Banal is far from satisfied.

"We're winning but we have to raise it [concern]," says Banal.

But the defending champions are barely poised to win when they meet the turbines in Philippine squad in the PBL Open Championship rookie at the Letran Gym.

Magnolia-FEU will aim for its fourth straight victory at 2 p.m. to improve its chances of clinching one of two outright semifinal berths.

The Ice Cream Wizards are a game behind league leaders Granny Goose and Montana Powerhouse 5-1.

ICTSI La Salle, meanwhile, will try to keep its momentum going against Toyota Otis Lift (4-3) at 4 p.m.

The Archers snapped out of their four-game losing spell by thrashing Granny Goose, 82-71, last Saturday with Mac Cardenas, who has been running a one-man show, getting help from JV Casio and Joseph Yeo.

"We have to do well against teams, especially against Cardenas and Yeo," said Knights coach Louie Alas. "They are both exciting and explosive players so we have to play solid to beat them again."

The Knights topped the defunct, 98-91, in their first-round matchup.

Buoyed with the biggest problem, though, is Air Philippines. Unlike fellow newcomer Granny Goose, the Flight lost their winning touch in their last six games. Jianmarie'Al Paye

AFP1990's Alando (11) and JR Quinahan of Granny Goose try to stop a driving Mark Cardona of La Salle ICTSI in their game late day at the Makati Coliseum. The Archers prevailed, 83-71. (PJ file photo)

Paragua misses top 10 finish

TEHRAN — GM candidate Mark Paragua bowed to 2004 World Youth Under 16 champ Pentala Harikrishna of Hindi yesterday and failed in his latest bid to be top 10 in the 42nd World Junior Chess Championships in Cochin, India.

The 20-year-old Paragua had a slight advantage in the middle game but in 33 to in the Polo after 64 moves of a King's Indian Defense Petrov Variation Bird.

Paragua remained at 7 Upstairs and slapped to a tie for 16th place with one round to go.

Another Filipino, NM Oliver Barbosa beat Pde Mozart Geo from Tallahassee of Norway to maintain total to 6.5 points.

Xhao Jun of China beat IM Shen Yazmeka Quezada of Cuba to share top spot with super GM Dronala Harikrishna of India at 9.5 points. *Marlon Bernardino*

Hua Ching, CSB t'netters win

HUA CHING and College of St. Benilde-8 emerged in the men's and women's team champs, respectively, at the close of the 2nd President's Cup title tennis championships on Sunday at Rizal Coliseum.

Herbert Bruno, Harold Bonoy, Rodel Mike and Julius Bajaro combined to rule the men's division over Lasec Emmanuel, Johnson Santiagoo, Jovino Bonifacio and Christopher Cavallo of Mapa and Jose Pepe's Philip Ua, Charlie Lim, Jesse Alfredo Marco de Jesus and Michael Codampisan.

Wayne Saint Ong, Jed Rivera, Jeff Ani Llandrian and Aileen Armando delivered for CSB-S.

Southridge, Cheng Hua strike again

SOUTHRIDGE rolled followed up its 12-0 demolition of Lions last week with an 8-4 rout of Mendiola FC to keep pace with Cheng Hua in the Red Ribbon Football Bonanza played over the weekend in various Metro Manila venues.

Danny Han, 2-0 victim over Blue Bears Makati last week, sent host Ex Jobs Greenhills crashing to its second defeat, 2-0, Saturday to lead Group C with 2-0 win-loss card, the same record of Southridge in Group A.

John Carlo Jimenez scored on a direct free kick to put Cheng Hua on the scoreboard before Kith minute before Ernie Encomienda doubled the score 10 minutes later off an assist by Christian Briones.

At the 15:21 field, Hudson Aquino struck four times to lead all scorers for Southridge.

With eight goals in two matches, Aquino leads all scorers in the tourney, more that serves as opening ground for the Philippine Football Federation and the UAE Dammam Pro Sports in selecting the members of RP Under-14 team.

The tournament Presidents to connect to Metro Manila by Monica and Absolute Distilled Water and backed by ABC Interfootball show, Soccer Showdown.

SPORTSWATCH

Super Darts 2004 starts tomorrow

THE DAVITT Consolid The Philippines (DDP) holds the Super Darts 2004 starting tomorrow up to Dec. 5 at the 2nd floor of Pearl Plaza Mall in Tambo, Paranaque City. Supporting the P100,000 tournament are Sun, Smart, Piattel, Get, Lycos, Productel Accessories (through former Jos Mercedes), Today's Sports, Subaru Gulf, Winner Jet Darts, Cocky Bond Boulevard and Pearl Plaza. Interested amateur darts enthusiasts may call the Pasadena Pro Cup at 571-4400 or Dec. 1. The Philippine Open Singles Championship on Sun, Dec. 5 will be in Quezon Central's Zone—Silverio Nava Federal Complex rooms—admission Dec. 2 at 11 a.m. The RP Top Teams Championships will be played on Dec. 3 starting at 11 a.m. For registration, contact Amanda Santos at 563-6403 and Bonnie Escobar at 809-3699/3503.

MCC unrated active chess Dec. 4

THE DECEMBER edition of Makati Commercial Center Club unrated active chess tournament will roll at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4 at the clubhouse at 2nd floor of the Ayala Triangle Gardens. Open to all members, amateurs and chess players of the college and of now 1800. All trophies total pot of P15,000 with the tournament possibly up for improvement of P18,000. Cash prizes are awarded down to two players. Active admission amount of P350 will be given to the best individual player. For details, call 893-0412 and 893-0492/3006. Early entries include Victor Cortes, Normarie Jane Santos, Jr. Arturo Gabriel, Malcolm Bunsit, Kevin Rimola, Bill Tolentino, Carol Bodoso, Leo Wong, Dominic Lim, Bill Bakunini and Reynaldo Bagnayan.

60 fights scheduled at PCC tonight

SIX-TIME cochem of Metro Manila and nearby provinces are coming to see another special 6-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit with Gamefowl Commission (GAB) Gamefowl Breeders and Gamecocks Fans as sponsors. Meanwhile 60 fights are scheduled, according to derby host Gerald Standard Co. Fans who can make the session of Capt. Dick Dino, Tito Sotto, Randy Valentino, Bakukan champion Jose Lapid, Rizal Pedro, Anthony Abadia, Pablo Abdullah, Cheetah Eye Penggabriel Gacho, Gov. Eduardo Ejercito, Mayor Jinggoy Estrada and Bombay Mayor Alexander Aquino. Other celebrities expected to be present are Lito Lapid, Rudy Fernandez, Eddie Garcia, Dolphy, Vic Sotto, Joey de Leon, Richard Gomez, Ariel Ureta, Ramon Revilla Jr., Bong Revilla, Jinggoy Estrada, Jackie Rice, Ruffa Gutierrez, Dennis Padilla, Robin Padilla, Cesar Montano, Ramon Bautista, Rodolfo Vera Quizon, Jr., Ronaldo Valdez, Tirso Cruz III, Jaime Fabregas, Eric Quizon, Christopher de Leon, Zoren Legaspi, Richard Yap, Jolo Revilla, Bernard Palanca, Jeffrey Quizon, Jeffrey Tam, Jeffrey Hidalgo, Ramon Christopher Gutierrez, Ramon Ang, Manny Pangilinan, Manny Villar, Jr., Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, Senator Ramon Revilla, Senator Jinggoy Estrada, Senator Bong Revilla, Senator Lito Lapid, Senator Vicente Sotto III, Senator Francis Escudero, Senator Loren Legarda, Senator Mar Roxas, Senator Manny Villar,

Economy grows by 6.3 percent

Front page A1

...e, unlike an interview that the economic growth would not necessarily translate to significantly higher revenue collection for the government because of several tax exemptions in the country.

While agriculture contributed a lot to economic growth, the sector is exempt from income tax and, therefore, is not helping raise revenues for the cash-strained government, according to Ortiz.

Ernesto Pernia, an economist at the University of the Philippines and former economic secretary at the Asian Development Bank, said the country's economic growth would not be sustained unless the fiscal problem was addressed.

"Our economic history showed that it is marked by booms and busts. If the reported growth rate is accurate, it is likely to be unsustainable," he said in an interview.

Pernia said that solving the fiscal problem was fundamental to the country's economic growth. Without enough revenues, the government will not be able to spend sufficiently for social services and infrastructure, as well as social elements in attracting foreign direct investments, he explained.

Resilient

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the latest GDP growth figure indicated that the economy was quite resilient. "Maybe it's about time institutions and investors take a second look at the Philippines," he said.

The International Monetary Fund projected that the Philippine economy would grow by 5.2 percent this year. The Asian Development Bank placed it at 5.3 percent.

Revised 3rd quarter

With the economy able to sustain growth since the first half of the year, the GDP could grow by at least 6 percent for the whole year, according to Neri.

Growth

The average GDP for the first three quarters stood at 6.3 percent, after the NSCB revised the annual growth figure from 6.1 percent to 6.6 percent.

NSCB data showed that the agriculture, fishery and forestry sector grew by 7.9 percent in the third quarter from only 4.7 percent during the same period last year.

The industry sector posted 4.6-percent growth compared to the previous year's 3.7 percent. The services sector grew 7.1 percent, up from 5.7 percent.

Exports of goods grew 10.3 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively, while personal consumption rose 5.9 percent.

Spending for construction rose at 5.6-percent growth, reversing last year's 12.9-percent decline.

Next year's growth in the country's trading partners, including the United States, Japan and China, contributed to the increase in Philippine exports.

He explained that inflation was partly offset by the robust growth of the agriculture sector, which resulted in higher incomes for people in the provinces.

Poor not enjoying growth

While there is growth, it does not sufficiently trickle down to the masses, according to Pernia.

He said the high incidences of poverty and hunger were proof that the poor were not enjoying the economic growth. He cited the December survey by Social Weather Stations, which found that 15 percent of households had experienced hunger in the three months before the survey.

Neri said the government's lending program to micro, small and medium enterprises was its way of equally spreading the economic benefits.

He acknowledged that the higher-than-expected GDP growth would not help much in preventing a credit rating downgrade by the Philippines if downgrade will worsen the country's weak fiscal position because it will result to higher borrowing costs and increase debt payments.

Credit rating agencies focus mainly on the health of the country's fiscal sector in making its assessment, Neri said.

The Philippines received warnings of a possible credit rating downgrade amid its fiscal problem, characterized by a huge budget deficit and debt. The Arroyo administration is hoping that Congress would pass four revenue measures before the end of the year to prevent a downgrade.

Moody's visit

This week, representatives of the credit rating firm Moody's Investor Service will visit the country to assess its fiscal condition. Moody's earlier said there would be downside pressure on the Philippines' credit rating if some of the revenue-raising measures were passed within the year.

But Neri said Congress and the executive branch were already working to pass the measures.

House and Senate leaders made a commitment at last week's Legislative-Executive Development Council meeting to hold joint and immediate sessions to pass the four measures within the year.

These are on the reduction of the value-added tax exemption, limited attention for revenue collection agencies, the franchise tax on telecommunication companies, and the increase in excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol.

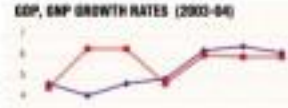
Other measures include a tax amnesty, an increase in documentary stamp tax, reduced net income tax and an increase in the value-added tax rate.

Together, these are expected to generate P80 billion a year, and are intended to help ease the national government's deficit and debt.

The national government's budget deficit stood at P197.8 billion in 2003, while its debt reached P3.3 trillion as of the first half of the year. With an AP report

IN THE KNOW

GDP/GNP GROWTH RATES (2003-04)



Asean leaders vow to fight trafficking of women

By Cornelio S. Fernandez
PDI Pinipaini Bureau

VIENTIANE, Laos—The 10 countries comprising the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) have vowed to work together to fight the trafficking of persons, particularly women and children.

The commitment was contained in a declaration signed by the heads of state of the Asean members during their 10th summit, which opened yesterday.

With the declaration, the group reaffirmed its commitment to the "dignity and worth of the human person and the importance of the quality of life of the peoples of Asean."

"The immorality and inhumanity of this common concern elicits the need to strengthen legislation, law enforcement and judicial responses to ensure deterrent action is taken against persons involved in individual or syndicated activities of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children," the group said.

Asean is composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

In the declaration, the group listed eight measures as a move aimed at first to combat trafficking in persons, which has been described as an "emerging regional problem."

These measures include the closer cooperation with domestic laws and the policies of each member-nation, although the group acknowledged the need for a comprehensive regional approach to prevent and fight trafficking in persons.

The measures include the establishment of a regional focal network to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

The group vowed to undertake concrete actions against individuals or syndicates involved in trafficking and to offer one another the widest possible assistance to punish such activities.

The Asean member-states also promised to distinguish the victims from the perpetrators, and identify their countries of origin and repatriation. Based on the declaration, the victims will be treated with "due respect for their human rights and dignity and protection from further exploitation and harm."

The Asean leaders also promised to undertake actions to respect and safeguard the victims' dignity and human rights.

They also committed themselves to having regular exchanges of views and to share information on relevant migratory flows, trends and patterns, as well as to strengthen border controls and monitoring mechanisms and other appropriate and necessary laws.

They promised to intensify cooperation among respective immigration and other law-enforcement units to detect fraudulent travel documents and forged passports and other official travel documents from fraud.

Last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed Republic Act No. 9208, otherwise known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, which imposes stiff penalties on convicted offenders.

While the Philippines was said to be the first country in Southeast Asia to come up with tough measures against trafficking, the problem has persisted.

GMA to meet telecom execs on franchise tax measure

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Christine O. Avendaño
PDI Pinipaini Bureau

MALACAÑANG expects President Macapagal-Arroyo to talk to executives of the top telecommunications firms to speed up the passage in Congress of the franchise tax measure today.

"I don't see why the President would not seek to do that [meeting with telecom executives] if it only is to hasten the process so that we will not have too much slippage or stumbling blocks by way of passages of the franchise tax," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters yesterday.

The President wants the Senate and the House of Representatives to hold joint hearings to fast-track the approval of the franchise tax on telecom firms and thus help shore up the value-added tax (VAT) exemption enjoyed by oil firms and petrodollar-like lawyers and doctors before the end of the year. Each tax measure is expected to generate P1 billion in revenues yearly.

Talking directly to leaders of the industry that Malacañang wants to tax more is not new in Mr. Arroyo. She had invited executives of Pacific Telecoz Corp. and Philip Morris Philippines to a dinner in her Forbes Park residence on Dec. 23.

At the meeting, the President unveiled a compromise tax formula for cigarette taxes that would resolve differences between Fortune and Philip Morris on how to impose higher taxes on cigarettes while ensuring that the government can realize its desired revenue collection target.

By getting the support of the tobacco firms, the President expected a clear path for the passage of the so-called "sin" tax bill, which is currently under deliberation in the Senate.

Ermita said the possibility of Mr. Arroyo sitting down with executives of Smart Communications and Globe Telecom "is just of the process because the effected industries, the affected company executives should be involved."

Globe Telecom spokesperson Anne Campos said the business that the company was "open to any dialogue or public hearing" on the franchise tax.

"We're only hoping to see that simple Congress has not yet set a formal hearing and any move on the franchise tax is still up for discussion," he said.

Campos said the industry would rather have any suspended VAT rather than a franchise tax.

Asean, China to create world's biggest trade zone

Front page A2

Monday's agreement applied to Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. Exempted members of the 10-nation Asean were Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Burma (Myanmar).

The 10-Asean leaders wrapped up the two-day summit with photos of their shoulder-counter meetings and planned to meet with counterparts from China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand before the summit closes on Tuesday.

A common statement said the meeting came while the region was confronted with "recent terrorist attacks, the hike in oil prices, the spread of bird flu etc."

Still, "we reaffirmed our commitment to achieving an Asean Community through initiatives and approaches to accelerate economic integration," it said.

The China free trade agreement, which aims to remove all tariffs by 2015, is part of a wider "plan of action" to cooperate in politics, security, military affairs, transportation, information technology and tourism.

"An enlarged East Asian bloc can secure not only the future of the economic growth of Asean, but also the future of China, Japan and Korea," Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said ahead of the summit.

Said India in the mix, and it will create a "formidable regional grouping" to stand against the European Union and the United States, she said.

Removing tariffs between the 10 Asean countries and China would build on two-way trade expected to surpass $100 billion this year. The accord sets up a billion-ton of trade disputes.

Asean will sign a pact on Tuesday with India on cooperation in trade, culture and politics. But free trade area between the two regions is still many years away.

India is keen to attract investment in tourism, infrastructure and agriculture after demonstrating its multibillion-dollar economy 10 years ago. Southeast Asia has tactfully exploited the opportunities with its foreign direct investment in India of only reaching $4 billion in 2003—only 3.6 percent of the global total.

Despite the sluggishness of the economy, South Korea and Asian member Singapore concluded a free trade agreement.

Australia and New Zealand, invited to the summit for the second time in succession, signed a year-old treaty aimed for closer trade ties with Southeast Asia. But Australia resisted calls by Asean to join its nonaggression pact.

No interference

During the summit, Asean upheld its principle of not interfering in members' domestic affairs on Monday, making no mention of the small-pocket program to control democracy in military-ruled Burma.

Burmese Prime Minister Gen. Soe Win "did not mention a word about the internal politics of his country," and no other leader questioned him, Thai government spokesperson Jakrapob Penkhae said.

Jakrapob said some leaders talked about the Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand, but did not mention the committee in...

Free trade pact . . .

Front page A1

early next year, and a Japanese trade official said the two countries wanted to implement it as soon as possible.

Chief Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said Manila had agreed with Tokyo to cut only 100 items in the first year.

"That's only the initial group because we also want them to be trained in the Japanese language," she told Reuters. "It's our choice that it is like that because we don't want to go into a country where we will have problems later on," she added.

Japan's rapidly aging population and low birth rate mean it must let in more foreign workers to maintain productivity and stay competitive, experts say.

But the Japanese authorities may be wary of opening the door too wide due to fears about the impact on unique Japanese culture from foreigners and living in crime and terrorism.

"The danger of total opposition to letting in foreign workers are over. Now it's a question of how fast and under what kind of system," said Atsuo Tanaka, a researcher at the Institute of Developing Economies.

Tokyo's priority in the economic partnership it has repeatedly recommended that Japan ease its barriers to letting in skilled workers in a variety of sectors, and that controls on other sensitive branches are seen less as trade issues—unskilled foreign labor.

Reuters

PNP raises alarm over fake chaplains

Front page A3

Chances are, these chaplains of the sloth are out to extort money or goods from the unsuspecting public.

Director General Edgar Aglipay, chief of the Philippine National Police, yesterday sounded the alarm on fake police-station fellowship reports that chaplain service IDs were being sold at P1,500 each in the provinces.

The phony IDs were said to be proliferating in Cavite, Pampanga, Tarlac and Baguio City.

Acting on reports, Aglipay ordered all police units, particularly the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, to arrest bearers of the bogus IDs, then prosecute all the fake chaplains could seize just for the suspects.

"We fear that these IDs could be used for extortion," Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson, told the Inquirer yesterday.

Bataoil said unauthorized bearers use phony IDs to gain access or privileges normally accorded to men in uniform.

According to Chief Supt. Isidro Lapeña, PNP director for operations, the questionable IDs were issued by the Values Institute Council of Ministers PNP/Christian Fellowship.

They cover the official seal of the PNP, including the signatures of its top officials.

At the back of the cards are the names of Bishop Bernardo Pinlac, VFCDI national president, and Senator Supt. Roberto Barbers, national chairperson, both of whom are identified as "training authorities," Lapeña said in a statement.

...ment unless it is reasonably...

Foreigners living in Japan totaled 1.81 million in 2003, about 1.4 percent of the population.

The government has estimated that there are more than 200,000 illegal aliens in the country and police operations in the Japanese Islands of Japan's rising crime rate, although statistics do not back that assertion.

Japan's graying population means demand for nurses and other caregivers is bound to increase in the years ahead.

Nearly one in five Japanese is aged 65 or over and that figure is expected to rise to one in four over the next decade.

Low birth rate

Japan's fertility rate—the average number of children a woman bears in her lifetime—hit a post-war low of 1.29 in 2003.

However, opposition from the Japan Nursing Association to loosening the barriers has been stiff.

"The Japanese Nurses' Association's specific stance and it is easy for the nurses to become politicized," said Ikuo-ichi Takiyama, a senior economist at Japan Research Institute, a think tank.

Takiyama pointed to the government have repeatedly recommended that Japan ease its barriers to letting in skilled workers in a variety of sectors, and that controls on other sensitive branches are seen less as trade issues—unskilled foreign labor.

Reuters

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 30, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

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SMC sets sights on US acquisition

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., new an expansion binge in the Asia-Pacific region, has expanded its horizon to include the world's biggest economy—the United States.

A high-ranking SMC official told the Inquirer that SMC was studying the possible acquisition of an American company with an annual turnover of $5 billion.

The official said the company was also looking at another officials company in Australia with a $1.5-billion annual revenue base.

"They are all in the food business," the official said, noting that was part of the company's overseas expansion plan.

SMC plotted its aggressive regional expansion last year after raising $146 million from the sale of a 15-percent stake to Japan's Kirin Brewery Ltd.

The plan was to put up new food and beverage manufacturing complexes in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan and southern China mainly through joint venture agreements.

Aside from Vietnam, SMC has facilities and operations in China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Australia and Australia. It recently made inroads into Thailand and firmed up its expansion plans in Malaysia.

The official said SMC was now keen on grabbing opportunities in the United States, the world's biggest economy.

SMC earns only 15 percent of its revenues from its overseas operations—four breweries in mainland China and one each in Australia, Vietnam and Indonesia. But the aggressive regional expansion is seen to increase that contribution to as much as 40-50 percent.

Despite the difficult environment, SMC believes the global market presented a lot of opportunities for the company as the domestic economy post a very little room for growth.

In the local market, for instance, SMC already controls 95 percent of the market. The conglomerate is also the single most dominant group in the food and soft drink business.

As the economies of Vietnam, southern China, Indonesia and Thailand further improve and as growth shifts to urban centers, it anticipates a growing preference for lifestyle and conveniently packaged products.

Early this year, SMC started setting up a non-alcoholic beverage facility in southern Vietnam on a 150,000-square-meter property in Binh Hoa City, Dong Nai Province.

It also broke ground for a new beverage manufacturing facility in Indonesia.

SMC's ambition is to be among Asia's top 30 food and beverage firms by 2007.

Malaysian joins ₱10-B SLEX rehab

By Charina S. Bulatao
and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LEIGHWELL Green Infrastructure Inc. has tapped MTD Capital Berhad of Malaysia as its strategic partner in the P10-billion rehabilitation and upgrade of the South Luzon Expressway.

MTD Capital is the second biggest toll operator in Malaysia handling four tollways there. It also operates a tollway in Sri Lanka. Listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, MTD Capital registered a turnover of $152 million in its latest year ending March 2004.

The Malaysian firm will lend up ownership Leighwell Green. It will also buy into Southeast Development and Acquisitions Corp., a low-key Filipino group that bought into Leighwell Green early this year.

Leighwell Green president Joel Bellaro said MTD Capital would work with Sunhouse Development to raise the P5-billion equity for the project. The rest would be financed with loans, including a $100-million facility that International Finance Corp. planned to underwrite.

Leighwell Green owns 80 percent of South Luzon Tollway Corp., a joint venture with Philippine National Construction Corp.

"The Tollway Regulatory Board has found MTD Capital as an acceptable partner of the group and is prepared to work on the Supplemental Tollway Operations Agreement or Toa immediately," Bellaro said in an interview.

He said the consortium had informed Indon

(To read more news on Page B4)

Currencies

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Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Improved market sentiment seen

MARKET sentiments expanded to improve after reading macroeconomic fundamentals today on the higher than expected economic growth in the third quarter.

Analysts had expected market players to adopt a wait-and-see stance this week over sentiments of possible higher interest rates next year.

But the third quarter economic performance was strong enough to secure growth for the whole of 2004 of at least 6 percent, above the government's current forecast of 5.9 percent to 6.4 percent, he said.

The economy grew 6.2 percent in the year through the third quarter topping forecasts for 5.8 percent.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 58.59 points or 1.05 percent last week to end at 1,854.30.

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Sell phone message

Conrado B. Bernal III

LOS GEL Davao's one more net plan of this Calmot revamping, God's disengrading popularity chal. hinged over announcement of Mindanao.

The government wants to sell the cellular telephone companies some more fee to claim that the cellular phone companies never had it so good.

Thanks to its subsidiary Smart Communications, for example, PLDT posted a P20-billion profit in the past three quarters.

And this rate administration wants to request all sorts of new taxes on the cellular phone business. The taxes will, of course, take away from the companies the funds needed for investments in new technology.

To be able to continue selling cell phones and cards, the cellular phone companies must invest billions upon billions more into the business.

Coming soon to cell phone subscribers is the next technology called 3G, or "third generation" cellular phones.

The 3G cellular phones have capabilities beyond anybody's wildest dreams, including those of breathless cell phone executives and hefty appointees in almost every other major corner of Metro Manila.

NOI'ice, the 3G cellular phones can access files and sports clips, download music, run video games, tap the Internet and perform video calls.

The ordinary Filipino cell phone user, in other words, will beg, plead and borrow to get his hands on the new technology. The cell phone companies must therefore provide it.

It was estimated that new investments in 3G infrastructure and equipment will hit more than $1 billion.

That's a lot of money for the cell phone companies. At the same time, this city's administration wants to get a good chunk of it to give Congress its rightful share of pork.

BUT WHO, the estimated $1 billion in fresh investments is only for three licenses, which the NTC is thinking of giving out to cell phone companies.

Last Friday, the National Telecommunications Commission already held the first of a series of public hearings on the terms of 3G cell phones' use in the country.

The NTC wants to draw up rules and regulations on how it can, for instance, assign 3G radio frequency bands to the cell phone companies.

The previous practice was, well, the cell phone companies needed to know somebody big in Malacañang to get frequency bands.

Maybe this time, the NTC thinks it can go it alone. Good luck, bro!

NOT surprisingly, the world's largest mobile handset maker, Nokia, already announced that it would launch 10 models of high-speed 3G phones next year.

And so, I think you should start saving now for the new cell phones of your teenage kids. You can have their old sets, anyway.

The 3G technology is coming sooner than you think.

In fact, the NTC already decided to allow the entry of five players in the 3G bandwidths.

Now the two leading cell phone companies, Smart and Globe, are said to be reluctant to go into the 3G technology right now. They need tons of money, right?

But quite a number of major players in the industry are showing interest in acquiring 3G licenses from the NTC.

As to what companies the NTC will settle on, will probably depend on how many million pesos they can give to Imee Palace connections.

BASED on industry estimates, some 26 percent of the cell phone subscribers in the country are likely to replace their old units with the new 3G models.

3G licenses had been given out in other parts of Asia.

Those are in countries like Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and—surprise—even Vietnam.

On the other hand, other countries are already using the 3G technology.

These are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bermuda, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Moldova, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Venezuela.

You know what? The new technology is in place even in hard-to-spell countries like Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

In fact, even the National Telecommunications Commission is considering to issue a publicly listed firm called ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp. or ATRKE.

It seems that ATRKE reported to the SEC that it sold its 51.8% interest in a company called Professional Mineral Holdings, Inc. or PMHI.

How true with our because there is a flood of dollars.

The company PMHI, in turn, owns about 86 percent of a personal company called TPE Corp.

The legal counsel of LBC, Reynaldo Ingcoco, wrote the SEC that ATRKE might have made a mistake in the report.

Either that, or as the LBC lawyer insinuated, ATRKE would have been guilty of fraud.

FIVE years ago, you see, a subsidiary of ATRKE, the one called ATRKE Capital, already sold 26 percent of the PMHI to LBC. That was in August of 1999.

So how would ATRKE sell the 1.48 percent it no longer owned?

Of course, 51.8% percent gives the undisclosed buyer a clear majority control over PMHI.

Control always fetches a higher price.

Based on SEC records, the ATRKE directors include Santos K. Ayuyao, Manuel N. Tordesillas, Lawrence T. Bautista, Ronald Arabozo, Oscar Tibaan Yu, and Carol Chan Tin Ying.

The LBC lawyer told the SEC that the apparent "double sale" of the 1.48 percent interest in PMHI will start a war between LBC and the undisclosed

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First Pacific allots P150M to help Nenaco

By Clarissa S. Batino

FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong is putting in more than P150 million to help accelerate the recovery of its local shipping unit Negros Navigation Co., a top official of Metro Pacific Corp. said.

This was confirmed by First Pacific managing director Manuel Pangilinan.

The capital infusion into Nenaco followed a recent ouster of First Pacific to sell 5 percent of its stake in Metro Pacific for P660 million. Part of the proceeds would be used to help fund Nenaco's rehabilitation.

First Pacific remains in control of Metro Pacific with a stake of about 66 percent after the share sale.

"First Pacific is looking at supporting Nenaco moving forward," Pangilinan told reporters in an interview Friday.

Metro Pacific president Jose Ma. Lim said the parent firm, First Pacific, would provide an additional capital of "more than P150 million" so that Nenaco can improve its fleet.

Part of Nenaco's problem had been its inability to generate more revenue. Five of its 9 vessels have been in drydocking this year, reducing the company's trips by about 10 to 20 percent against last year.

Completion of the Roxlite Transport operations more than 20 ships.

In its Oct. 22 disclosure, Nenaco told the stock exchange that it would need about P350 million between now and the middle of 2005 to pay its outstanding notes and to repair its ships.

At that time, it had raised P120 million through a loan from Metro Pacific and still needed about P127 million. The funds, according to the disclosure, would come not from equity from a third party.

It was not clear whether the balance was the money that would come from First Pacific although Lim said the parent firm's infusion would be "on top of what Metro Pacific had already committed to Nenaco."

"First Pacific is putting in more money to rebuil Nenaco. We [Metro Pacific] have completed that already," said Lim, referring to the position that the First Pacific's local subsidiary had earlier committed to raise for the ailing shipping unit.

Kenneth Stokoe, president and new chair Guillaume Tagaud Jr. said in October that the balance of about P127 million would be spent to drydock and repair three vessels...Sr. Rose the Apostle, San Pedro and St. Ignatius of Morong.

Nenaco's losses continued to drag Metro Pacific's profitability. First Pacific's local subsidiary registered a net loss of P33.9 million in the first three quarters against a profit of P107.7 million a year ago.

Metro Pacific said the improved performance of property unit Landco Pacific Corp., which posted a net profit of P22.9 million for the nine-month period as up from P95.8 million a year earlier. Asked to offset Nenaco's losses.

Nenaco incurred a net loss of P182.4 million for the first nine months, reversing the year-ago profit of P13.6 million.

"[Nenaco's] has reflects a substantial decline in consolidated revenues to P5.3 billion for the first nine months of 2004, versus P7.8 billion in 2003 and due to lower ship frequencies and reduced in-service fleet size," Metro Pacific said in a statement.

Malaysian joins . . .

(Continued from B1)

ny Secretary Oscar Perlitina that it needed an financial support from the government. The state-owned National Development Corp. had wanted to put in P3 billion to repay the Alabang market.

Bataron said the group would not favor instead the NDC's participation in the funding of the right-of-way acquisition from Calamba to Sta. Rosa in Intramuros, which is divergent of the P30-billion, first phase of the SLEX project.

MTI Capital was chosen over five other foreign groups that showed interest to the project. Bataron said the Malaysian firm was the most committed to put in equity in the venture.

Other foreign firms like SNC Lavalin of Canada, Tumcrest of the United States, Bouygues of Switzerland, BOMBR of France, and the Spanish group of Cavidra Servicios Inversa Alum would come in as turnkey contractors.

Another parallel development in the SLEX is the extension of the elevated highway dubbed the Skyway from Sucat to Alabang.

Metro Pacific Corp., the local unit of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd., is to talks with its Indonesian partner Citra Group to pool together an investment group for a possible participation in the SLEX project, according to MPC chair Manuel Pangilinan.

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(Sgd.) Atty. Daisy L. Parker
Corporate Secretary

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TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of Zeus Holdings, Inc. will be held on 14 December 2004 at 3:30 p.m. at the 21/F Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
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MEDICard-GSK Tie-Up

MEDICARD PHILIPPINES, the country's largest HMO, recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the country's largest pharmaceutical company. The new partnership is inline with MEDICard's campaign on vaccination as one of the keys to effective healthcare management. Present during the signing were (L-R) MEDICard's Robert John Chaniani (Mktg. & Sales Supervisor), Voltaire Victoria (Mktg. & Sales Mngr.) and Luis Montoya (SVP & GM) with GSK's Willie Lozada (VP for Pharma Business), Joel Mallari (Operations Manager) and Cecile Hernandez (Diseases Area Manager).

Breaktime

From page A1

buyer.

He was early group is bound to claim control of the company.

Now how long will it take before the conflict is resolved? Probably long enough for the business to suffer.

And so, LBC pointed out to the SEC that the report of SFRE, if it was not an honest mistake, should cast serious doubt on its integrity as a publicly-listed firm.

So, so what? That's only half the story. The other half, which is just regarding the misfortunes of investors who were and years to the deliberate. What's that to the SEC?

BSP tightens screening of banks handling trust

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE P400,000 limit on big Filipino has tightened the accreditation system for banks and quasi-banks seeking to act as trustees of government debt papers.

In a circular the Monetary Board approved last week, private banks or non-bank financial institutions must have a license to engage in trust and other fiduciary business before they could hold in trust debt papers issued by local government units and government-owned and controlled corporations.

The banks must maintain a risk-based capital adequacy ratio of not lower than 12 per cent and have complied with the minimum capital accounts required under existing regulations.

They also must comply with the minimum capital accounts under existing BSP regulations, whether for universal and commercial banks, branches of foreign banks, thrift banks and non-bank financial institutions.

The BSP also set the following requirements:

• The applicant's operations during the preceding calendar year and for the period immediately preceding the date of application must be profitable;

• The bank should not have incurred net weekly reserve deficiencies during the eight weeks immediately preceding the date of application;

• It must comply with banking regulations in the last two preceding examinations, including the appointment of two independent directors, the ceilings on credit accommodations to directors, officers, stockholders and related interests (diset), liquidity floor requirement for government deposits and single borrower's limit; and

• It should maintain adequate provisions for probable losses commensurate to the quality of its assets portfolio but not lower than the required valuation reserves to determined by the BSP.

• Its head office, branches or other offices must not have outstanding "due from/due to" accounts in excess of 1 percent of the bank's total resources;

• It must establish a risk management system appropriate to its operations; and

• It must have a CAMELS composite rating of at least 3 in the last examination, according to a scale of one to five where five is the highest.

CAMELS is the acronym referring to six key factors used in bank examinations—capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk.

To ensure the independence of the trustee, the BSP prohibits any financial institution from acting as trustee for any GOU or GOCC which has an elective or appointive official having more than 10 percent of its shares or such number of shares sufficient to elect one board member.

A bank or non-bank designated as trustee is also required to submit to the BSP's Supervision and Examination Sector a waiver of the confidentiality of information duly executed by the issuer of mortgage or bond in favor of the BSP.

fourth quarter to maintain a 25 percent share in the tourist arrivals from Korea.

The airline firm said it was expecting a 14 percent increase in tourist arrivals from South Korea this year to about 400,000 from 350,000 in 2003.

During the first half, about 180,000 Koreans arrived in the country.

South Korea's Asiana seeks additional fuel surcharge

By Clarissa S. Batino

SOUTH Korean carrier Asiana Airlines has asked the Civil Aeronautics Board for an additional $5 in fuel surcharge, on top of the $7 it was charging on every one-way trip to and from the Philippines.

Two weeks ago, Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific also sought the CAB's go-ahead for an additional fuel surcharge of $2.50 on short one-way trips and $5 on long flights. This was Cathay's third fuel surcharge application and Asiana's second.

Pending before the CAB are similar applications of Northwest Airlines, Singapore based Silk Air, Singapore Airlines and Taiwan's China Air.

CAB executive director Tonia Mafolabe said the board has not given any recent approvals on fuel surcharge applications.

Only the local carriers were given a provisional authority to collect fuel surcharge on domestic trips and increase their ticket prices due to rising fuel cost.

Philippine Airlines, Cebu Air Pacific and the Philippines Corp. collect a fuel surcharge of P300 to P900 on domestic flights.

PAL was also allowed to increase its fuel surcharge on foreign flights to $3.6 from $6 for one-way long haul flights, to $3.0 for flights to the Middle East and to $1 for short trips.

The CAB also allowed the Philippines to start collecting a $6 fuel surcharge on one-way chartered flights to China.

Jet fuel accounts for about 30 percent of an airline's operating cost, the reason flagtons experience after labor, according to industry sources. The fuel surcharge is added to the ticket price and should be removed once prices of aviation fuel ease.

From about $44 a barrel in June, the price of jet fuel had eased by more than $10, it is said.

The CAB allowed Cathay in September to increase its one-way fuel surcharge to $7 from $5 from short flights and to $10 from $14 on long flights. Now Cathay wants this raised to $9.50 for short flights and to $27 for long trips.

Asiana Airlines, meanwhile, said it wanted to increase its flights to the Philippines by the

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LIFESTYLE

Self-discipli
is needed to
get you bac
your fitness
regimen

What happens when you stop exercising

It's sad but true that to maintain your hard-earned workout results, you have to stay fit by continuing to exercise regularly.

In fitness parlance, this is called the reversibility principle. To lay people, this simply means use it or lose it.

Without a doubt, you will unarguably lose whatever benefits you gained from working out when you stop exercising.

This can discourage many people from even starting to exercise. I have heard many physically inactive people defend their lifestyle by saying, "What's the use of exercising? When I stop, I'll just get fatter."

Detraining or cessation of exercise is also a problem for athletes who get injured.

Research has shown that the problem is not really a case of "use it or lose it." It seems to be more like "use it or lose some of it, or maybe all of it." Depending on how physically fit you were before detraining, which aspect of fitness (endurance, strength, flexibility) is involved, and what preventive measures you take.

WELL AND GOOD

TINA JOSEPH

Misconceptions

There are many misconceptions about what happens to the body when exercise stops. The most common is that the muscles turn into fat. Let me assure you this is a physical impossibility. Muscle cells are completely different from fat cells.

What really happens is that muscle cells become smaller or they atrophy, but cells become bigger leading to a change in appearance from firm and lean to soft and flabby.

Another misconception is that you will become fat or set flabbier than when you started. Admittedly, you will eventually return to your pre-exercise shape, fat levels and muscle tone but you won't be worse than when you started.

Changes in stamina

The many women of athletic or serious fitness habit to lose fast and lose much of the conditioning the benefits they have achieved will be lost from detraining.

Though the benefits will definitely be reversed, people with a high level of aerobic endurance can retain many of them for a longer period.

In studies done by Dr. Robert Moffat of the Florida State University and Dr. Randall Wilber of the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, highly trained athletes showed a rapid drop in aerobic endurance in the first three weeks of detraining. But the decline slowed in the following weeks.

Three months later, their aerobic statistics were still higher than that of sedentary individuals. Scientists were encouraged and surprised by the findings.

They were surprised by the rapid initial drop in stamina and by the fact that a significant amount of aerobic power remained even after 12 weeks of detraining. They could not determine whether this was due to a cumulative effect of high fitness levels over the years, or genetic factors, or both.

They discovered the opposite for people with low to moderate levels of aerobic fitness. These people showed little changes in exercise in the first three weeks but quickly reversed back to pre-exercise levels thereafter.

Changes in strength, muscle size

Dr. Edward Coyle from the University of Texas, a leading researcher in detraining, found that muscular strength remained at pre-exercise levels after only four to 12 weeks of detraining. Muscle size was also reduced. This is why many people notice their bodies "sagging" after a few weeks without exercise.

Changes in fat levels

Exercise, especially aerobic-type activities, burns a significant amount of calories. It is no surprise that stopping exercise can result in weight gain if people continue to consume the same amounts of calories as when they were working out.

LeCi assumes a person burns 900 calories by doing three exercise sessions a week (300 calories per session). He continues to say that

Sports store opens in the south

A NEW Sportscentral store has opened at SM Southmall.

The one-stop shop packs a lot of action with its exciting range of sports gear, footwear and accessories from leading international brands.

Sports enthusiasts can literally have a ball with the in-store half-court hoop basketball. Or they can go rappelling on the 11-ft indoor wall climb. Participants are not only provided complete equipment, but also assistance from professional wall climbers for their safety.

Philippine Basketball League consultant Chino Trinidad was the guest of honor at the opening day's ribbon-cutting ceremonies, joined by Sportscentral's Philip Go.

Hardcourt hunks present included Chester Tolomia, Wilfrito Marmeclay, Jun Anthony Cuching and Beau Dy of the Welcoat Painthousers team, who were accompanied by head coach Jay Leganchon and assistant team manager Boy Luglid.

Also seen talking sports were Philippine Basketball Association players Udtoa Cruz, Ashton Ilas Mirelis and Benny Sigar of Shell, as well as varsity players from colleges and universities such as the 2004 UAAP Champion Ateneo Basketball, the Lady Blazer Team of Adamson University, as well as the Lady Maroon of the College of St. Benilde and the Tigers of the University of Sto. Tomas.

The opening was also a gathering of executives from leading sports brands. Among those spotted were Wilhem and Wally Dionisio of Diadora, Mitoh Lim and Ruben Cudiang of Bewax, Adolfo Ian Reyes of Asics, Lisa Jurisdia of Reebok, John Silva of Vans and Umbro, Rudy Fontelo-Lopez of Sundugan and Lily Ang of Rasos.

Sportscentral is located at 2/L SM Southmall.

SM'S grand opening at Sportscentral.

AT THE RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY, SM's Jimmy Lim, Sportscentral's VP Philip Go, Rep. Fr. Rudy Macabeo and PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Vertical and horizontal scissors on stability ball

TI-ED advanced exercise works the buttocks and hamstrings.

Equipment:
Stability ball

Exercise technique:

1. Kneel down with the ball in front of you.

2. Place your torso on the ball and roll forward until you have both forearms on the floor. Your legs should be straight behind you on your toes.

3. Contract your buttocks and lift both legs.

4. Lift and lower legs alternately to do vertical scissors.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions. Rest.

6. Repeat the exercise by opening and closing legs to do horizontal scissors.

Performance tips:

1. Vertical scissors: Exhale as you switch legs. You will automatically take a short inhale in between.

2. Horizontal scissors: Exhale as you open legs; inhale as you close them.

3. Look down at the floor but keep your neck in line with your spine.

4. Lift your legs with control. Contract your buttocks muscles first before lifting.

5. To make the exercises harder, use an ankle weights.

Repetitions:
Do 15 repetitions per exercise.

What happens when you stop exercising

Story page 10

some amount of calories after he stops exercising. Everything else being equal, he would gain about 2 pounds of fat (15,000 calories) per pound of fat) in three months.

Preserving fitness benefits

You don't have to lose all your fitness benefits if you have to stop your workouts because of injury, school or office work or other reasons. However, the following suggestions probably will not help if you stop exercising due to laziness. Some amount of self-discipline is required to follow the recommendations.

Researchers have found that muscular strength and size can be maintained by doing one-to-two-weight training sessions per week. This is good news if you are too busy to work out this holiday season. By doing just one weight training session per week, you can maintain your strength until you can resume exercising regularly.

However, you can only do this for a few weeks. You can't do a once-a-week routine indefinitely and expect to maintain your strength and muscle tone. Six months is too long.

In aerobic fitness, scientists recommend you do half your usual frequency and duration of workouts but at the same intensity to prevent retention loss. In a study of distance runners who reduced their training volume (frequency per week and length of workout) but not the intensity for a three-week period, researchers found that the runners showed no change in their 5-km race pace/performance.

To prevent weight gain when exercise stops, determine how many calories you were burning with your fitness routine. Reduce the same amount of calories from your diet.

Restarting

Detraining should only be temporary. If you have stopped for a long time, the sooner you start exercising again, the better for you. The hardest part is starting again. Be sure to start gradually to avoid injuring yourself.

Visit www.inquirerfitness.info.

Badminton gear promo

TOBY'S Sports will hold the second raffle draw of the Grand Badminton Gear Giveaway on Dec. 15.

To join, simply use the Grand Badminton Gear coupon that can be found inside the October and November issue of Badminton Philippines magazine. Fill out the coupon and drop in drop boxes at any Toby's Sports Metro Manila, 100 Marikina and Old Bacoor branches. Deadline for entries is on Nov. 30.

There will be 12 lucky winners in the second raffle draw. Grand prize is a make to the Prince Triple Threat 1000 while seven winning prizes include a pair of Mizuno's Wave Thunder badminton shoes, five long sleeve of RS Victory shuttlecocks and five specially designed Toby's badminton bags.

As an added bonus, the Grand Badminton Gear raffle coupon also serves as a discount coupon that entitles holders to a 20-percent discount on cash and 5-percent discount on credit card for a minimum purchase of P1,500 at any participating Toby's Sports outlets.

Winner of the first raffle draw was Pancrik Joseph Damsik from San Fernando, La Union. He won an SM Millennium 9-4000 Badminton Racket.

A David protecting a giant

Text by Anne A. Jamboro
Photos by Jim Gates Pancuan

LIKE many others, it was love for scuba diving that made an environmentalist out of businessman Rodolfo Zamora Jr. It was, in fact, diving that led his family to open a resort and dive site in 1994.

His concern exposes to the sea eventually carried his passion to save the endangered tridacna gigas, known as the true giant clams, two years later.

Although are endemic to the Philippines, the t. gigas is among species declared endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Zamora started with 12-15 clams. Today about 200 are securely planted around the seabed of Dive & Trek Resort and Marine Sanctuary in San Isidro, Davao, Mindanao.

Many of them were "adopted" by Manila-based candidates during the World Coastal Cleanup Day, an annual activity started by the resort since last year.

Vision takes shape

After eight years of patiently growing and preserving the t. gigas, Zamora's vision of recreating the sanctuary's marine diversity promising livelihood opportunities to the local community and supporting the government's Marine Conservation and Seeds Enhancement Program is taking shape. The resort is the first private entity to take on the daunting task of putting up a clam hatchery.

The Breeding and Grow-Out Hatchery is located inside the resort's premises. Zamora hopes, through it, Dive & Trek can succeed where others have failed—spawn t. gigas. If the project succeeds, the clam's reproductive will momentarily increase, at least, in Babak-Davao.

"Once you go into hatchery you're talking about thousands of giant clams produced each year, between 10,000-20,000, enough for seeding," Zamora says.

Hundreds of million of eggs and sperms are expelled into the sea during a single broadcast spawning. Of these, roughly 20,000 are projected to survive into adulthood, or less than one percent. Zamora says it will take nine months before the baby clams are the size of a 25-centavo coin, big enough to be transferred to ancestral nursery.

They will still be kept in cages, of course, to protect them from predators. After two years, when they would have reached maturity, the clams could be released to the sea, he says.

Sexual maturity is reached in three to five years. The t. gigas is initially a male then a hermaphrodite a year later. The giant clams may have both male and female sex organs, but sperm and eggs are released separately to prevent self-fertilization.

Artificially induced

In their vast ocean home, though, self-fertilization and even cross-fertilization are sometimes impossible. Hybrids are produced that exhibit the parent species' characteristics.

In a controlled environment such as Dive & Trek's clam hatchery, broadcast spawning is triggered not by temperature, light or salinity changes. It is artificially induced by adding concentrated sperm and eggs. Spawning sometimes like warm water in the winter. Giant clams can be spawned only once a year, and a disaster of 15 t. gigas is needed for at least one pair to successfully breed.

Zamora only has 14 to work on. It would take another few years before the resort could have the minimum of 75.

Although he hopes Dive & Trek's first attempt at spawning will be successful, a deal with the University of the Philippines' Marine Science Institute (UPMSI) at the Bolinao Marine Laboratory (better known by its acronym, Bomalabo) had already been sealed. The UPMSI will provide Dive & Trek biologist specialist at Bomalabo for the resort to grow.

"We coordinate with the UPMSI at Bomalabo for technical support since they are the only one knowledgeable in this technology in the country," Zamora says.

Eileen Gomez, often depicted in old fairytale flicks as vicious, cold-hearted carnivorous effortlessly gobbling up human beings, are actually lethargic creatures whose massive mouths close over so slowly.

Fully grown t. gigas, in fact, measuring up to 1.5 meters in length and weighing an average of 440 pounds, eat no larger zooplankton than a shells.

Sunlight-dependent

The *T. gigas* depends heavily on sunlight and its symbiosis relationship with photosynthetic algae called zooxanthellae that live in their fleshy mantles. The zooxanthellae manufacture food for the clam, such as complex sugar, carbohydrates, and amino and fatty acids, etc. by transforming carbon dioxide and dissolved minerals. With sufficient sunlight, the zooxanthellae will continue to function.

Hundreds of eyes on the t. gigas' mantle are sensitive to green, blue and ultraviolet light that helps position the clam properly to sunlight and expose as many zooxanthellae as possible.

The zooxanthellae, in return, gets its oxygen from the clam's wastes. Through this system of recycling nutrients between the clam and the zooxanthellae, the t. gigas has a very efficient internal food system.

The largest and heaviest of all living mollusks, this enormous shellfish is also the largest of the giant clams and can live for more than 100 years.

RADIOISPAIN environmentalist Rodolfo Zamora Jr. dreams of a day when the clams would spawn on their own in their natural environment.

He hopes Dive & Trek can succeed where others have failed—spawn 't. gigas'

of golden browns, yellow or green with iridescent blues, purples or green spots. The zooxanthellae will begin to disappear, bleaching the t. gigas into whitish-brown before it finally dies.

Worst threat

Its deadliest predator, however, does not live in the ocean. Humans have continually harvested the t. gigas for its flesh, believed to be an exotic aphrodisiac. They also use it as decor in aquariums, as jewelry or ornaments, or just to display in shelf like an enormous trophy shell.

"Problems [adapt to keep the human] produces many that's why we have people guarding our shores. We are also educating the fishing communities here. Since the presence of clams invite schools of fishes to our shores, people want to fish here and sometimes harm the clams," he says.

Zamora expects the bay to be a major attraction someday for both diving and non-diving tourists. "Magandang lugar na yan dong ma-crystalline waters ng Balayan Bay nito nkasi it was before," he says.

E-mail the author at ajamboro@gmail.com.ph

GROWING at more than four inches per year, the giant clams obtain a maximum length of four feet, weigh 440 pounds and live for more than 100 years.

THE LOCAL fishing community is beginning to learn to understand the importance of t. gigas in their shores.

Do you think you're sexy?

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

OFTEN, the term sexy is misunderstood, reduced to something that is banal.

But feeling sexy isn't about sex: It's about embracing the fullness of who you are, valuing your femininity or masculinity as a positive expression of your being.

Here's a to-do list to help you rekindle your inner fires, allow you to express yourself with confidence and, yes, feel sexy.

• Feel good about yourself. Reintroduce yourself to yourself. A mirror is the best tool for this, like you are meeting yourself for the first time. Begin with "Hi." Follow with a smile.

• Declare yourself your own best friend. An affirmation is the most potent approach. Repeat "I am my own best friend" three times. If it helps to face the mirror, do so.

• Find your inner silence. You must give yourself quiet time. Using your inner radar, go around your house and find a place where you feel most comfortable. Declare this your sacred space.

• Meditate. Ten minutes a day of just sitting undisturbed is enough to calm your body and senses. This is an instant turmoil-buster.

• Relax. Listen to soothing music, read an inspirational book, walk in the garden or park, have a massage.

• Start a feel-good journal. Make weekly entries about all the positive things you have done for yourself.

• Make a to-do list of waylaid dreams, ambitions and plans (yes, even childhood dreams) and set a reasonable timetable.

• Begin a health regimen. Being good to yourself means first learning how to nurture your body. Start eating healthy food. For starters, just add more vegetables and fruits diet.

• Allow yourself ample time for physical activity. Exercise boosts the hormones and strengthens the immune system. The after-exercise endorphin rush is great for feeling sexy.

• Pat yourself on the back each time you have done well any task or endeavor. Declare: "Good job!"

• Set up a reward system for yourself. (Example: Save a portion of your salary/allowance in your reward box. Your savings should add up to quite a sum that you can spend on yourself at year end.)

• Do the birthday booster. On the morning of your birthday, sit up with bright eyes and a radiant smile. Breathe with gusto and affirm: "Today, I am reborn." Better yet, consider every day a birthday.

• Once a week, treat yourself to a relaxing bath or shower. Mix five drops of rose or ylang-ylang essential oil in your warm bath. Light a candle. Dim the lights. Float in your waters of peace.

If you don't have a tub, get a big pail of warm water and mix your oils (substitute for the oils could be one lemon and one orange, including the peel; squeeze the juices minus the seeds, then throw in the peel). Pour the scented water over your head and relax.

• If it's time for a change, a new look ought to make you feel renewed—a new haircut, wardrobe or simply adding vibrant colors to your look should rev up your system.

• Practice being non-judgmental—of others and especially of yourself. Don't be too critical of yourself. And stop punishing yourself for past transgression. Guilt is a sin to the self.

• Take a power health drink each day. It could be carrot-apple, apple-cucumber, beet-carrot or just plain unsweetened coconut/buko juice.

• Declare one day of the week meat-free (pork, beef, chicken). Feast on fish and veggies on your meatless days.

• Wear a smile each day, no matter how stressful the day may be.

• To combat stress, simply hold your breath for seven seconds. Release with an "ahhhh."

• Tell yourself constantly that God walks with you. So feel the power!

Love and light!

LIFESTYLE

What kept me going was the promise of a smaller waist, slimmer legs and short skirts galore

Confessions of a closet South Beach dieter

By Elaine Isabel Ta Aquino
Contributor

FOR A WEEK now I have avoided all kinds of fat, dairy, sugar and carbs. Yes, I've lost 5 pounds. Yes, I feel lighter. Yes, I can fit into the smallish clothes I bought in the hopes of getting slim. Yes, people have noticed. And, yes, it is such a hard, hard, hard thing to do!

I love carbs, not to mention sugar. I was born with a sweet gum. The glucose in my cells cries out with carbs as before I assess, ad-libs on crackers all day until dinner a gigantic sandwich and finish off a whole slice of cake after every meal. I can snack on three kinds of fruits in one sitting, no problem. To have only fruit smoothie creations in malls and enjoy my leafy serving of greenery as gratis. Give me pasta and noodles anytime, anywhere. Congee, too! I can go on and on about my love affair with anything carrot and heavy on the stomach, but that is about the South Beach diet, so I'll try not to digress too much.

Starting is not my cup of tea. I have never tried any of the many popular diets like Atkins, Ashy, Cabbage, etc., they just don't make sense to me. Why starve

CONTINUED ON C3

HOTSHOT Jet-setters: AF/KLM marketing manager Bingo Bragonia, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, PAL SVP External Affairs Amor Concepcion, with Monsieur Louis Vergeon and Mary Rose Mamaparad of PAL.

PENINSULA'S fine couple, Daniel Bandelier and Marilou Tuvia-D., with AF/KLM-Japan country manager Jaap Lourens; chair and CEO-SOFL Louis Hoosdolf, and two

ABF France gang of four: Yan Eskuela, AF/KLM, with French Consul Monique Picard; AF's Tesa de Guzman, AF's Tiennen Agence, Jean Pierre Gauthier of the French Embassy and Beng Reyes of AF

No one calls me Tito Maurice!

SUPER eligible bachelor, businessman Ricky Delgado, with Cuban Ambassador Ramon Domingo Alonso Medina

TOP gal of AF Tesa de Guzman, with her French pal, ravishingly Service Medina

THE FRENCH connection: Jean Pierre Gauthier and French Ambassador Benoit Peyrat

HELPING the children of HOUSE of Hope were, among others, Fernando Zobel with his niece Sofia Z. and her husband, Poni Elizalde

PROUD parents of boy model William, Marilou and David Bandelier with international businessman Edmund Medina

ALL set to go on the catwalk: Bambina Jacinto, Jenny Zobel and Sophie Segal

FASHSTYC young women + mentors behind the Big & Small Co.: Vicky Jalandoni with Karina Alonso Gonzales, brilliant singer Hendra Lacuberga, Trisin Lapa and Joanna Diggle Duarte

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Vara Hagere co-Rodiah Mata

BEYOND, because I know take note, palangga.

In spite of the half page story in the heaven morning the public, especially hotels, airlines, organizers of events like product launching and other big happenings, such as parties and opening, this character called Mark Anchetta (if that's his real name) is still making the rounds saying he represents the heavens.

He also has been soliciting favors in hotels and other places, saying he is my assistant, and has the gall to drop my name to get tickets for concerts and plays, calling me "Tito Maurice."

Well, to set the record very straight, even my blood relations, including my nephews and nieces, have never called me "Tito" as I have never allowed them to do so from the very start.

Secondly, I have never had an assistant from the time I started to write a column to this day. Nor have I ever had a ghost writer! I only have one female secretary, who works in my home, and two photographers, namely, Miss Van Hagen and Emily Gutierrez, who most everyone knows anyway.

Please be aware of this, palangga. Be not be fooled and let yourself be trapped in the spider web of this character.

Neither the heavens nor I have or will ever have anything to do with this persona.

Merger

The minute I entered the house, I could feel the super fun vibration with an international flavor from all the invitees, palangga. Be sure there to witness the official transfer of title for France's commercial activities to the super KLM, a Dutch company by one of Mr. Maurice's two favorite expats, Air France's popular GM Louis Vergeon, no less, who hosted a swinging cocktail in his sprawling residence.

Heading the pack was the vivacious, adorable French ambassador Benoit Peyrat, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, and BPO's young brother/protégé Edgi Montevirgen.

The gang of French numbers/goddess like Louis Paul Brunnell, Philip Gauthier, Jean Pierre Gauthier, Jacques Brunelet, Pierre Given, and Yves Cauldilhon, among others, was all there to give moral support to the Air France group.

KLM's brilliant, well-respected country manager, Jaap Lauronse, represented the KLM group, palangga. Also there were some chosen Air France top clients who arrived in full jet-setting force.

The best part of the affair was the grand raffle of three super business class tickets to destinations, Paris and Manila, offered by the new hand-in-hand Air France-KLM group.

Two gorgeous women, stunningly attractive Manila Vicky Hagedorn S. and beautiful brunette Meyenne Carmona were the first two lucky winners. The third lucky one was French expat, socialite Anthony Parent. "I had to be a blue-eyed Frenchman whom I have known for 20 years that drew my ticket's raffle stub," said a super excited, happy Meyenne C.

Her gaze Alex such a right bag he almost collapsed.

Vicky H. was so amazed, couldn't believe her lucky stars and was grinning from ear to ear.

In his touching speech, GM Louis Vergeon thanked everybody for patronizing Air France all these years. He presented his rah! rah! secret weapons, his staff, cutely, that arrived all their chores well. He emphasized through that this was not his farewell party because, he was staying on to develop further the presence of Air France in Asia Pacific.

A fantastic good time, we all definitely had, palangga.

HOUSE of hope

Those fantastic women who care, had the Big & Small Company welcoming families and friends to the HOUSE of Hope, for the third year in a row, palangga.

HOUSE stands for Homeless Opportunity Unit for Service to Education. Located at the Makati Medical Center, its residents are children with cancer or blood-related disorders.

"The idea was set up by a group of caring doctors to offer support to the sick kids and their parents," succinctly explained by one of the unsung behind this cause, beautiful Jeannie Diggle Duarte of the Big & Small Co.

The gala was held at the elegant, "Once Upon A Time..." activities began with a magical journey to a "faraway land" held at the SEC Tower at The Fort. It was great watching society's best namedropables enjoying their fabulous Wine, Fondue, Sushi & Sashimi, and Magno's Pizza, and food from Cibo, Max's Restaurant, Pacific, and Jenny's popcorn and cotton candy.

Among those having a blast were Tony and Marilou Climaco; Gil, Alex and attractive Lizette Reuben Cojuangco Mimay and Jennie Mosaic; Pardo and Jane Tuason; Xuxi and Marilou Bautista; Jun and Bernice Reyes; John and Peachy Concepcion Delfin; and Audie Regis; Edmund and Jocelyn Wadhy; Rachel Poggio, and Gigi Montenaka, plus the other 200 or so persons belonging to Cisco Medlin's old and new guards. They were all there to give their full support to this super worthy cause.

As in the past, the best part of the happening was the fetching three-year-old kids and models paraded on the catwalk to clothes by Big & Small's Karen' & Baby Orange Juice and Spin. Again the endless applause for the young future models, the Tan and Jalandoni, Bautista Lanchangco performed so well, the invited members of the fans knew, palangga.

Sponsors of the event were Globe Telecom, YMV Aguinaldo press, Monaco Academy, Bimon, Gabriele Pita, Pfizer, and Nestlé Baby.

Okay people, please, please! If you're interested to volunteer or contribute to HOUSE, do contact doctors Angelica Ronas, Bianca Olivarez, or Beverly Quitoriano, at 815 9911 loc. 7865.

I assure you, palangga, knowing you helped in what civil way, for this children in desperate need will put a smile on your face.

WINNING circle: Gorgeous gals Vicky Soriano and Meyenne Carmona flank lucky Anthony Parent. All three won KLM business class tickets.

ABF's Gail Mercenado of Air France Cargo, AF Regional Cargo manager-HK Christian Lay and AF/KLM country manager Jaap Laurens

NATIONAL Commission on the Role of Filipino Women chair, woman of substance Myrna T. Tan

AF regional human resources manager Joni Yves Le Goff

CONCHITA Simkins, de Tuda

HBKR Cuna with Pia Santos and Alex Benjamin were almost as good as professional models as they showed off their colorful Orange Juice outfits.

EYE-CATCHING Bea Elizalde

HANDSOME William Bandelier shows off his Spin T-shirt and pants.

JEWELTEN Gorgeous showing off outfit from Orange Juice

Is it evil to consult a psychic?

MAUI, a 26-year-old law student, wants to consult a psychic but is afraid it may go against her religious beliefs. She wants to know if I think it's evil to do so.

Malu has been consulting a psychic the past three years yearly for fun. But now she has a real concern. "My objective," she said, "is to check if I'm on the right track. If I'm making the right decisions in my life."

But she's not sure if she will be doing the right thing. "Almost all the articles I've read discourage consultation with psychics," she said. "They associate it with the devil. I personally believe their powers are gifts from above, aren't they? Why should God bless them with them if they are not supposed to share them with others? Can't God use psychics to guide people?"

She said she psychic she planned to consult was a devout Catholic.

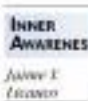
She added she's really confused. "I look up to you as an authority on the matter. Your help and advice will be greatly appreciated."

Biblical stories

I don't really understand why many Filipino Christians consult psychic powers, prophecy, dream interpretation, bedtimology and similar subtleties in the evil when the Christian Bible is full of stories about these practices? We, I do not consider consulting a psychic evil in themselves, but will advise caution and discretion before setting sail on.

There are many psychics in this country but only a few are truly powerful, ethical and professional. Since you have already consulted this particular psychic and believed her to be "God-fearing and a devout Catholic," to use your words, then what is there to fear?

If you read the Bible even casually, you will notice that it is filled with stories of people endowed with very powerful psychic gifts. In the Old Testament, dream interpreters, such as Daniel, are considered to be close to God. Even judges, like Deborah and Samuel, consulted psychics.



Jaime C. Licauco

Have come to be thought to be in league with the devil, not with God?

In the Bible also are cite find many demonstrations of psychic powers as telepathy (related to mind communication), prophecy (telling the future), mediumship (talking to spirits of the dead), astrology, numerology, psychic healing, clairvoyance (intuition, clairaudience and remote viewing. It is taken for granted that some people possess such gifts.

Even St. Paul pointed out in Corinthians that "prophecy, healing, speaking in tongues," etc., were "gifts of the Holy Spirit."

Why then do we think of them as evil? As you pointed out, "Why can't God use psychics to guide his people?"

Erroneous thinking

Our concept of good and evil in this conservative Christian country is very narrow indeed. We associate every positive not sanctioned by our Christian religion to be evil.

This erroneous thinking should not be allowed to go on without being challenged or corrected.

Our country's economic and political progress has been retarded by our erroneous and often conservative religious beliefs. We are evil in everything we do not understand or we do not like. We consider anybody who does not belong to our religion or who has different beliefs to be an enemy and therefore evil.

But didn't Christ Himself demonstrate a form of psychic powers? When He read the life of the woman at the well? When He changed water into wine at the wedding at Cana? When He multiplied a few loaves of bread to feed thousands of people? When He walked on water? When He predicted that Peter would deny Him not one of His disciples would believe Him? When He conversed over telepathy from a mountain?

What are these but an artistical objection by God that psychic powers are good and should be used to help people?

"But that's different," I hear someone protesting. "What Jesus Christ did were miracles that could be done by ordinary people like us."

I beg to disagree. Jesus Christ said in no uncertain terms, "The works I have done you can also do and much more than these." That quotation is in John 14:12.

We would be remiss in our duty as Christians if we do not develop and use our psychic gifts the way Christ inspired us to should do. To me, what's wrong with consulting psychics and bonesetters is not that they are evil. They are not. What's objectionable is that one may become dependent on them, losing his self power and depending on the psychic in making decisions.

But if your objections are silent and you don't become dependent on these gifted individuals—watching them only once in a while—I see nothing wrong in that.

Why not use the services of these people?

Voices calling

Maria, another reader, wants clarification on what I wrote in a previous column. "You said if you heard someone calling your name, the house was haunted. How come I hear the voices of my friend Tito calling me, but they are alive? I lived with them since 12 yrs. to Grade 2, but I now live in a boarding house in Manila. Why do I hear their voices?"

Assuming there's nothing mentally wrong with your ears, then you must be merely missing them or you are claimvoyant. That means you are able to hear thoughts or voices at a distance.

Maybe your Tito and Tita were thinking of you at that moment. Ask them about this happened to you again. There's nothing to worry about. Everything is still normal.

Address letters to this column to *Ask Jimmy Pena L, 105 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati. Call 8157543 or 8924606. E-mail jimmy@pldtdsl.net.com.ph.* Visit http://jimmyscharmer.com. Listen to my AM radio program 7-8 p.m., every Sunday.

From page C2

Confessions of a closet South Beach dieter

yourself? Why consume so much animal fat and carb complex carbs? Or, even worse, why consume so much cabbage? Oh, forget the school-ish Gothic.

The basic question is, why ignore food? Glorious, delectable, finger-lickin good food? Why not eat what you want when you want and be a happy, sated fool? I pondered these questions as I tried to shimmy into my oldest, wedding clothes, and failed miserably. Okay, so maybe dieting can be my short-term cup of tea, once or so more.

"So, why?" my guarding mountain persists. "Be healthy and trim?" my sensible inner lovers argues. After a brief tug of war, one of the two wins and so begins my search for the diet.

The Blog

After reading Nat Magazine's article about chef Heather Crosby's no-bananas Diets-to-Go, I checked out research on the South Beach Diet (SBD) online and, given my background, as a chef, made a mental plan for the first two weeks for my husband and me. The diet itself wasn't too bad: it sounded reasonable and not at all insane. And the 8:1:1 proportion presented I would lose in the first two weeks was to the thing to try.

Cheap of me not to visit a bookstore and furtively glance at the SBD cookbook, culminating several recipes to memory, instead of shelling out some thing in the vicinity of P1,500 for a publication half-filled with recipes, the other half full of lifestyle and scientific background info. So, I, a self-loved food nerd, as a chef, make a mental plan for the first two weeks for my husband and me. The diet itself wasn't too bad: it sounded reasonable and not at all insane. And the 8:1:1 proportion presented I would lose in the first two weeks was to the thing to try.

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Slow

Days One to Three went by soooo slowly. Despite the delicious recipes (some even Atkins-made for the Dieter-ish), I missed my rice, bread, noodles and slightly less of dessert. I expected, since I, a hamburger headache (mostly psychological) and was in fluffs. My mind ran with soup or adobo never looked so good, despite being a meatloaf and veggy man. I don't like sodas, but was aching for a tall Frappuccino from Starbucks. Even the usually wary writer in me was eating by the roadside pointed to tempting fingers in me and I almost succumbed.

What kept me going was the promise of a smaller waist, slimmer hips and shorter skirts! Oh, vanity, what a hard taskmaster you are!

Better

Days Four to Eight were one-sides sticky better. If you could call pretending a melted slice of low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese was pizza. My craving for sweets and carbs has lessened somewhat, though I'm scared of bingeing after this two-week self-imposed exile from Food Lover. I still can't help smacking my lips when I pass by a pizzeria, or salivating the aromas of steaming hot dim sum, and noodles that waft through the air of dong Hong.

Days Nine to Fourteen are still coming up, and trust I've survived the first week without fainting from hunger or dying from alienation, maybe I'll make it through this SBD thing after all. It's going to be my first successful diet and, hopefully, my last. I will have to curb my desire for all things sugary and floury for the rest of my life, but at least I can indulge now and then. I can't complain, especially if I get my longed-for food after 27 long years.

Dawn Isabel Yu Aquino, 27, lives in Hong Kong with her husband and 1 1/2 year-old son. She used to be a chef and caterer back in Manila, but she's a home manager a.k.a. housewife a.k.a lady of leisure now.